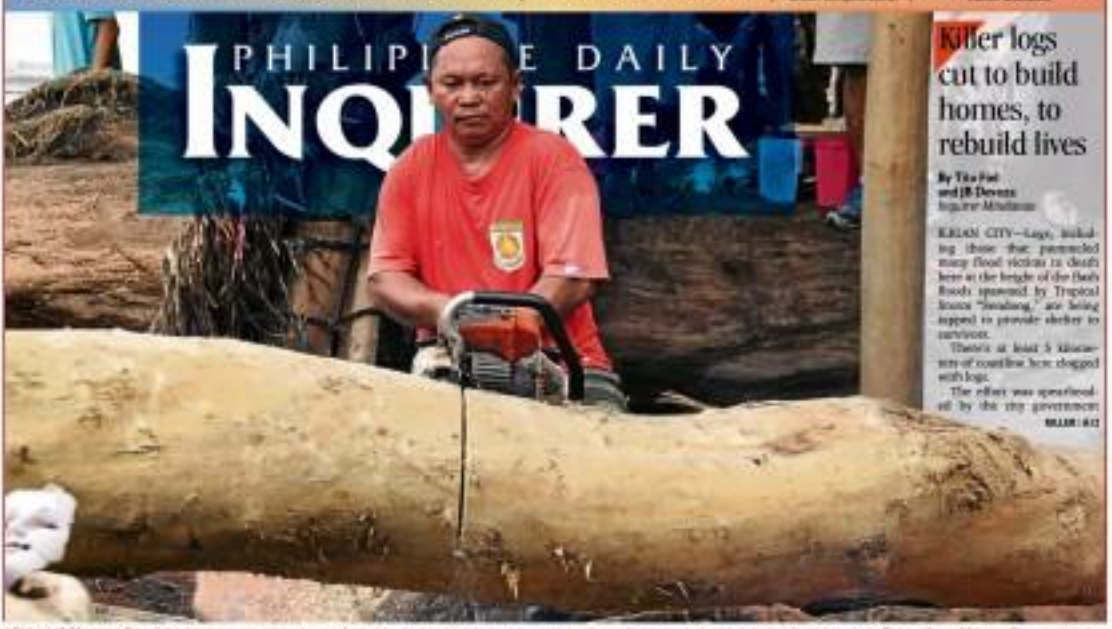
Thursday, December 29, 2011 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 21 P18 | No Alerts Text (NO CR BREAKING) to 4407 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet | Facebook: Inquirer.net Yahoo! Inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



Killer logs cut to build homes, to rebuild lives

By Tita Fel and JB Deveza
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—Logs, including those that pummeled many flood victims to death here at the height of the flash floods spawned by Tropical Storm "Sendong," are being tapped to provide shelter to survivors.

There's at least 5 kilometers of coastline here clogged with logs.

The effort was spearheaded by the city government

MAIN | A12

DEADLY LOGS Iligan City officials have given the go-signal to cut the thousands of logs that destroyed not only hundreds of houses at the height of the flash floods brought by Tropical Storm "Sendong" but also killed hundreds, and use the timber to build shelters for the homeless survivors. The City Environment and Management Office and Ecowatch Foundation lead the retrieval and clearing operations. ROMEL PUTOL PEJIMA RISMYO

Palparan draws support

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY Jennifer Lake cuddles her baby, Chad Michael, for whom she chose to give up her cancer treatment so "my baby is going to get born safe," she said. She died 13 days after the birth of her healthy son.

Teen ma quits cancer treatment to save baby

FOURTH LD, Idaho—Jenni Lake gave birth to a baby boy the month before her 18th birthday, though she was not destined to become just another teenage mother.

That much, she knew.

While being admitted to the hospital, she pulled her nurse closer to her and whispered into her ear. The nurse would later repeat the girl's words to comfort her family, as their worst fears were realized a day after Jenni's baby was born.

"She said the name, 'I'm done. I did what I was supposed to. My baby is going to get born safe,'" said Deana Phillips, Jenni's mother.

In photographs, the baby's ruddy cheeks and healthy weight offer a stark contrast to the frail girl who gave birth to him. She holds

TEEN MA | A11

Retired generals hit trial by publicity

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

FUGITIVE retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. has finally found succor and comfort from among his own.

The organization of the country's past and present military and police generals has called for a halt to the "undue trial by publicity" of Palparan who carries a P500,000 bounty on his head, even as they urged him to face the kidnapping charges for the 2006 disappearance of two University of the Philippines student activists.

The Association of General and Flag Officers Inc. (Agfo) yesterday denounced Palparan's projection in the media as a "serial murderer" when he has neither been tried nor convicted by a court.

"We are disturbed by the ex-

PALPARAN | A11

NOT A GIANT 'PLA-PLA' Health Secretary Enrique Ona (at right) and Health Undersecretary Eric Tayag show a compact disc containing sounds of the country's 8 most dangerous firecrackers. The "explosive CD" was launched yesterday at East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City. RAFY ALIDO

World's 'safest firecracker' packs a lot of bang

By Jocelyn R. Uy

GOOD NEWS to New Year revelers: the Department of Health (DOH) has found the "safest firecracker" in the world. And you don't need a match but a good sound system to make it work.

Dubbed "Goodbye Paputok" to rival the popular firecracker "Goodbye Philippines," the "safest firecracker" comes in the form of a CD that contains recordings of sounds produced by eight

WORLD'S | A6

LOL, jiggle piggy banks, dance... • 'Goodbye Gloria,' 'Pacquiao' best sellers / A2

'PH rises from grave of corruption'

By Norman Bordadora and Christine Avendaño

WITH 2011 drawing to a close, President Aquino said the country has risen from the grave of corruption and poverty during the one-and-a-half-year of his administration, and claimed a raft of achievements, including substantial savings of P42 billion, creation of 2.1 million new jobs and the development of a secret aquatic product he suspect that he could not name just yet.

Mr. Aquino said the country has changed for the better under his watch as he was able to bring back the people's faith in the justice system.

"Let us compare the present to the times past ... we have returned the blindfold of Lady Justice. Prosperity is benefiting not just the rich and powerful but also the majority of our people," he said in his New Year message that he delivered in

PH RISES | A12

2 dead in latest floods; 80 rescued

By Inquirer Visayas and Inquirer Mindanao

A 5-YEAR-OLD boy drowned in Dagami town, Leyte province, while a 50-year-old man was killed by a landslide in Cabalawan town, Negros Occidental province, on Tuesday as a result of incessant rains.

A child was reported missing in Tanauan town, Leyte.

At least 80 children were rescued in the town of Kapalong, Davao del Norte province, after they were trapped by floods on Tuesday.

Kapalong Mayor Edgardo Timbol said the children were from Tagum City and were attending a youth camp in Barangay Florida when the floods struck.

Heavy rains, triggered by a low-pressure area, have flooded large swaths of northern Mindanao, displacing thousands of families.

Continuous heavy rains have also caused flooding in various areas in southern Negros Occidental, Ormoc City, Leyte

FLOODS | A6

Tears, snow mingle at Kim's funeral

PYONGYANG, North Korea—Tens of thousands of North Koreans lined snow-covered streets on Wednesday, wailing and clutching their chests as a black hearse carried their late leader Kim Jong-Il's body through the capital for a final farewell that ended with a 21-gun salute.

The funeral procession on a gray, freezing day was accompanied by top military and party officials, but there was little doubt who the leader was. Son and successor Kim Jong-un served as head mourner, walking with one hand on the

TEARS | A17

Late strongman a cartoon villain and laughingstock / A17

NEWS
NPA extorted P300M this year, says AFP / A3

NEWS
Ombudsman files graft case vs GMA, Abalos, Mendoza / A6

ACROSS
Gov't permits used for illegal logs / A8

SPORTS
NBA: Heat beat Celtics; Lakers rout Jazz / A18

WORLD
Iran threatens to stop shipments of Gulf oil / A23

METRO
Beware of stolen cars sold online / A21

WEATHER FORECAST

NCR/CAR/I: Northern and Central Luzon with scattered showers; mostly cloudy skies with scattered thunderstorms and isolated flooding elsewhere. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated thunderstorms or localized flooding.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Mostly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Butuan	Partly Cloudy

Source: Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa)

Second FRONTPAGE

Website: ... | E-mail: ...

STL 2-D (as of 2 p.m.)
2 p.m.: 2 3 12
5 p.m.: 1 7 20
9 p.m.: 2 1 3

SUERTRES 3-D (as of 2 p.m.)
2 p.m.: 6 0 9
5 p.m.: 7 4 9
9 p.m.: 7 7 3

FOUR DIGIT (as of 9 p.m.)
7 0 5 7

MEGAMILLIONS
11 16 18 21 29 30
P19,348,144.00

6/55 GRAND LOTTO
1 4 18 24 29 31
P61,543,094.40

LOTTO: 5PM Tues-Sat LOTTO, result in 4PM. PCSO.gov.ph

'Next Chief Justice will be the best'

By Christine Avendaño and Marlon Ramos

PRESIDENT Aquino assured the nation that the next Chief Justice will be the "best" for the country and will be "no lapdog."

In an ANC interview before Christmas Day, the President took issue with Corona's recent speech where the latter slammed him for supposedly wanting to appoint a new Chief Justice that he could hold by the neck.

The President told ANC anchor Lynda Jemilla then in the search for a new Chief Justice his criteria would not include that the candidate follow Palace orders.

"Getting a lapdog is not and has never been part of the concept that exists in our family."

"At the end of the day, whoever I appoint I would have to be able to look at any of our countrymen and say: 'This is the best.'"

Mr. Aquino also reiterated why his administration wanted a change in the leadership of the Supreme Court, currently headed by impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona.

He said it was wrong for any branch of government to be "untouchable."

"I never thought I'd quote him [but it was] Sen. Arturo Tolentino who said quite a long while back that he was nervous about the autonomy...the growing power of the Supreme Court.... There might come a point wherein it will no longer effectively being checked and balanced by the other two co-equal branches," President Aquino continued.

Tolentino was a close ally of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and once served as vice president in the latter for a brief time before the Edsa people power revolt catapulted the President's mother, the late Corazon Aquino, to the presidency.

Asked whether he thought the country was at a point where the high court had too much autonomy and independence that it was now untouchable, he replied: "It's at a point where no one...no position nobody could review what they (the high court) has done."

"It seems no one challenges whether or not the Supreme Court decisions) are right. Could their perception be right? And I think I made public the issues that we had disagreement with," he said.

Corona's impeachment trial, he said, was a "step embodied in the Constitution, which provides a conflict of this nature."

Meanwhile, Supreme Court administrator and spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez yesterday criticized President Aquino for being "premature and arrogant" in ordering his legal advisers to look for a would-be successor to Chief Justice Corona.

In a press briefing, Marquez reminded Malacañang that the Constitution explicitly states that only the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) was authorized to screen and select candidates for justices of the high tribunal.

No vacancy in SC

"Let's not be too presumptuous and arrogant. There is no vacancy (in the Supreme Court). I think that's very clear," Marquez told reporters.

"Perhaps we can practice some degree of humility. Nothing is lost when we are humble," he added.

On Tuesday, Palace spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said the President had directed his legal team to list the possible replacements for Corona, who was impeached by the House of Representatives on Dec. 12, yesterday and the Aquino "needs assistance of the likes of Maybe Seven," referring to detention Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno, the President's first appointee to the high court and one of the dissenting votes in the recent Supreme Court decision to allow former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to leave the country.

A former national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), lawyer Jose Cruz, yesterday said the search for Corona's replacement even before the Senate could start the impeachment trial seemed "not proper." Graphics, however, signed a manifesto along with other legal luminaries in support of the impeachment process because "no one is public service is a natural one."

But Sen. Gregorio Honasan saw no problem with President Aquino's search for Corona's replacement. Mr. Aquino "has the [prerogative" to have a short list of prospective candidates for Chief Justice in the event Corona was ousted, he said.

Honasan said a bigger concern was whether or not Mr. Aquino had a clear plan and vision for the country. "I hope he has a clear plan, where to bring all this to the long run."

House leaders were more forthright in their support for President Aquino. With reports from Christian Esguerra and Gil Cabacungan

Don't expect riveting trial like Erap's—Joker

By Cathy Yamsuan

THE PUBLIC may be disappointed if it thinks the coming impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona would be as riveting as that of former President Joseph Estrada, a senator said yesterday.

"The trial will not be as fun as Erap's impeachment trial," said Sen. Jinkee Arroyo in a phone interview with reporters.

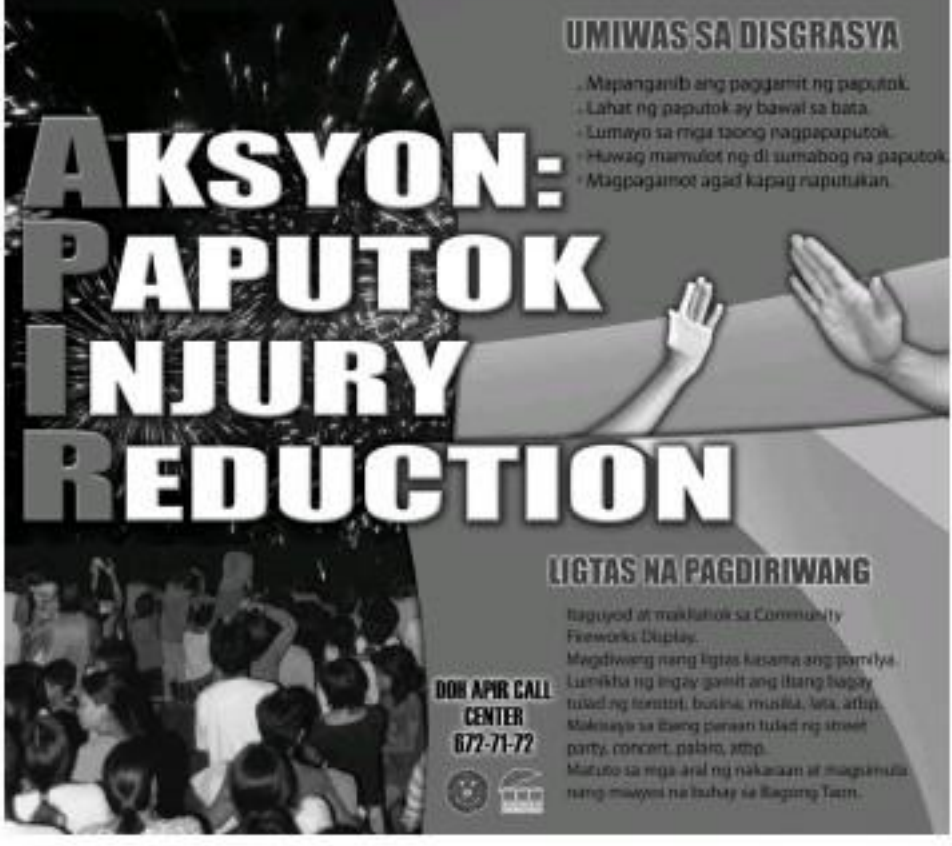
"Erap's case was mainly questions of fact while [that of Corona] would involve mainly decisions of the high court where the ruling parties of the Chief Justice is being questioned," noted the senator, who was one of the lead prosecutors appointed by the House of Representatives in Estrada's impeachment trial.

In Estrada's case, Arroyo said, television audiences were intrigued by the prosecution's parade of witnesses and documentary evidence that buttressed the former president's links to jueteng—an illegal numbers game—and the existence of secret bank accounts that may have held the kickbacks he allegedly received from gambling lords.

Television audiences were also glued to their sets as House prosecutors and Estrada's defense lawyers quizzed over whether the representatives should go to the New Wash district in Quezon City to inspect the so-called Boracay mansion allegedly owned by the ex-president.

"In the case of Erap's bank accounts and mansions, those involved questions of fact. But in the Chief Justice's case, there is very little question of facts in all the eight articles of impeachment," Arroyo noted.... There are more legal arguments than evidence," Arroyo said.

He added that in the coming impeachment trial that will begin on Jan. 16, the senator-judges would "only listen" as prosecutors give evidence.



AFP estimates NPA extorted ₱300M in 2011

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

COMMUNIST insurgents carried at least ₱300 million this year through extortion from businessmen, including those big businesses operating mostly in Mindanao, the military said yesterday.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said the estimate of the extortion earnings of the New People's Army (NPA) this year was based on military field intelligence reports.

The amount is more than P90.3 million that the AFP estimated the rebels made from January to November 2010 from the so-called "revolutionary taxes" imposed on businesses to assure whose NPA rebels operate.

The AFP said the rebels were able to conduct their extortion activities in areas where they maintain significant armed strength, namely in the provinces of Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon.

These provinces are mostly area of training and logging companies and agro-industrial plantations.

In 2009, the AFP estimated the NPA raised P346-million from extortion.

"Despite their projection of being a guerrilla organization, the NPA has resorted to extortion and other criminal activities in gain funds and support," AFP spokesman Col. Arevalo Bacpac Jr. said in a statement.

"The NPA is losing support from its mass base as they intensified on extortion of big companies," he added. He said the rebels had not spared the poor in the fining villages from overtime to get money to support the rebels.

Those who failed to pay the "revolutionary taxes" were reportedly targeted with attacks that destroyed their businesses, the military said.

The military said it recorded 31 NPA attacks this year on business establishments and government infrastructure projects that refused the rebels' unlawful demands.

The most significant attack this year took place in Bukidnon in October, when 200 NPA rebels staged simultaneous raids on three mining sites in Surigao del Norte destroying property and forcing the temporary closure of Nickel Asia, the country's biggest nickel producer.

With an AFP report

P-Noy: I want to see GMA remorse

By Norman Bordadora

JUSTHOW sorry will she be?

President Aquino said he will look for signs of remorse in former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should he have to decide whether or not to pardon her if she is convicted of the charges against her.

It will be recalled that Arroyo herself pardoned former President Joseph Estrada after he was convicted of plunder and faced a long stretch in prison.

Mr. Aquino, however, acknowledged that it was very unlikely to talk about granting clemency to Arroyo as she had yet to be arraigned in connection with the electoral sabotage case filed against her in Pasay City court.

"A pardon, I think, is governed by several policies within the Board of Pardons and Parole. The degree of remorse is one component that I remember," said the President in a recent interview over ABS-CBN News Channel.

"Of course, at this point in time they manifest that they are innocent of any of the charges. So if they still profess [their innocence], where is the remorse? Where can we see the remorse there?" he said.

At this stage of the process, however, Mr. Aquino acknowledged to anchor Lynda Jomilla that "it's too way, way ahead, Yolanda."

As for placing Arroyo under house arrest instead of a hospital detention as former aide is now, Mr. Aquino expressed his disapproval.

"Why house arrest? Magkasama pa ng arrest, di ko (There was an arrest, wasn't there)?" he said.

'Hospitals best venue'

The President said that if one were to consider Arroyo's medical condition, "the hospitals should be the best venue for it."

"I guess the only thing we can say is we still afford her her rights. We still protect them to the fullest extent possible."

He continued: "But at the same time there are issues and concerns that have to be addressed that were never addressed during her incumbency. So that is still we [will] have charges, if we have chosen, we move on."

Mr. Aquino, however, conceded that it would be up to the courts to decide whether Arroyo should be held at the prosecution's trial.

"It is the court that determines where the detainee should be held. In fact, there is an Article III of the Constitution about having no special detention facility but that was in the context of safe houses during the martial law period," Mr. Aquino said.

"But if we put her in a place that is not mandated by the courts, this can be argued as a special detention area in violation of the Constitution," he said.

In another vein, the President said the administration's anticorruption drive was moving but not as fast as he wanted.

"It needs six years to adjudicate a case? One would forget what the issue was, but I have to admit that really things are moving," he said.

One issue Mr. Aquino said he wished to attain closure was the "Hello Garci" scandal that Arroyo found herself in six years ago.

"For instance, the Hello Garci issue in 2004, we reached 2009 and the case wasn't even started. We have resolved the end of the presidential period. I was really pondering how do you actually resolve that?" the President said.

"How do you resolve that? with formality? With something that can serve as a lesson to the next two generations, three generations and so on. Fifty years from now, will they have forgotten it or will they repeat the same mistakes?"

COA questions Cavite-Metro road project

THE COMMISSION on Audit (COA) has found deficiencies and signs of overpricing in the Daang Hari-Sta. Lucia Road project of the Alabang-Sta. Tomas Development Inc. (ASDI) a subsidiary of Philippine National Construction Corp.

Among the things the COA questioned in its 2010 report on the ASDI were the absence of a public bidding for advance works on the project, which was handled by the PNCC; the lack of detailed engineering plans prior to the award of the contract; and the over 200 percent markup by the PNCC to the detailed engineering cost.

But earlier this year, ASDI terminated its contract with the PNCC. The Department of Public Works and Highways then held out the road project to a private contractor. The government said ASDI would be compensated for what it had already spent on the project.

The project will connect Daang Hari Road in Cavite to the South Luzon Expressway near the Batasan Heights interchange. It has been identified as a priority project under the Cavite-Laguna Transport Study of the public works department and is expected to decongest Metro Manila traffic.

ASDI entered into a memorandum of agreement with the PNCC in 2009 for advance works on the road project. The PNCC was designated the main turnkey contractor for the project design, the clearing of the rights of way and the completion of the road's first two lanes, including tollgate facilities.

In response to the COA findings, ASDI argued that the law allows it to award the project to PNCC. On the absence of a public bidding, it explained that the road construction was a private project because of the economic benefits it would bring to Lancaster, Carmona and Silang Municipalities. As for the overcharging on the detailed engineering design, ASDI would discuss the matter with the PNCC. Leila B. Salaverria

No number coding

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority will lift the number coding scheme starting at 1 p.m. today.

In a statement, the MMDA explained the lifting sought "to facilitate the convenience and mobility of the New Year exodus and returning motorists and commuters from the provinces this holiday season."

But the lifting of the number coding scheme does not cover the cities of Makati and Las Piñas, which have their own selective reduction programs.

The number coding scheme will also be lifted in Metro Manila on Friday, Rizal Day, which is a public holiday. Miko Morales

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Ombudsman sues GMA, Abalos over NBN deal

By Leila Salaverria and Christine O. Avendaño

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman yesterday filed a graft case at the Sandiganbayan against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in connection with the scrapped National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China, Inquirer sources said.

Charged along with Arroyo were former Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza and former Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Benjamin Abalos, accusing no two court sources, who asked not to be identified because they did not have permission to discuss the matter.

Ronald Llamas, presidential adviser on political affairs, confirmed the news last night, saying he got the information from the Ombudsman's sectoral office. The court sources said, adding that the charges sheet had already been assigned a case number.

The Inquirer tried to get official comment from Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales' spokesperson, Aaryson Kalaam, but failed to reach him.

The case stemmed from the criminal complaint filed by Rogen Mesa Rep. Teddy Casiño in connection with the proposed $329-million NBN deal with China's ZTE Corp. designed to connect government offices in the country through a broadband network.

Voluminous documents

The Aquino administration scrapped the deal in 2007 amid allegations of overpricing and bribery involving several Philippine government officials. The allegations also triggered a congressional inquiry.

The court sources said Dita Ibarra and staff members, one of them a woman, went to the Sandiganbayan yesterday but only cleared for the day yesterday and filed the case, handing voluminous documents to the court staff.

"The case has already been given a number," one of the sources said.

Arroyo is currently detained at Veterans Memorial Medical Center in connection with an electoral sabotage case filed against her before the Pasay Regional Trial Court arising from alleged rigging of the results of the 2007 senatorial elections.

'Significant step'

Llamas told the Inquirer by phone: "We received the news of the Ombudsman's decision to file charges against GMA the same time as the media and the public."

"We welcome the development as it is another significant step in the process of holding officials from the previous administration, including GMA, to answer for various charges of alleged corruption and other crimes," Llamas said. "As with the election sabotage case already pending against her, GMA will once be given the chance to clear the name of these allegations will be settled and, hopefully, those responsible will be held accountable."

"This clearly demonstrates that our institutions for justice and accountability are slowly yet surely getting back on track," Llamas said.

From page A1

World's 'safest firecracker' packs a lot of bang, bang

of the most dangerous firecrackers in the country.

The CZ is sometimes touted as the upgrade of the Judas, "watusi," Super Lolo, Judas Belt, whistle bomb, "bentis," "lawin" (quintillos) and "kwitis," capped with a countdown and a serenading of a fireworks symphony.

Most dangerous

Most of these have been listed as among the most dangerous firecrackers in the country in a DOH report last year.

The five-star, watusi and Super Lolo have been banned but their manufacture and sale continue.

Assistant Health Secretary Eric Tayag yesterday said cases of the CZ, aimed at promoting the "safest firecracker experience" among revelers this New Year, were being distributed to local government units in Metro Manila. The metropolis has the highest number of firecracker-related injuries every year.

Filipino band

The CZ was produced in collaboration with Herbert Hernandez, lead guitarist of Rivermaya, a Filipino band. Tayag told reporters at a press briefing in Manila.

Tayag said Hernandez, who also works for an advertising agency, offered to help the DOH kick off its campaign through the dance of injuries from the indiscriminate use of firecrackers.

"Tinay suggested the idea to us so we sat down in a meeting for some brainstorming," Tayag said. "We shot impressed! The idea during that meeting."

Free copies to LGUs

At least 500 copies were produced for free. The copies were sent to the distribution to local government units in the capital, which has registered 88 cases to 62 as part of its firecracker-related injuries as of yesterday.

The DOH is leaving it up to the local government to distribute the CDs to households, according to Tayag.

He said the contents of the CD would also be made available on the health agency's website, www.doh.gov.ph, in time for the New Year this weekend.

"Instead of lighting up a firecracker to usher in 2012, people could play a firecracker on their radio," said Tayag.

Traditions, injured kids

Filipinos traditionally set off fireworks at midnight on December 31 to welcome the New Year's Eve. They believe that the noise will ward off bad luck and drive away evil spirits.

But fireworks—the majority of whose are children—and up to nightly party due to firecracker injuries following the New Year festivities.

As of yesterday, the DOH had monitored 160 injuries caused by firecrackers, stray bullets and firework ingestion, a 24-percent jump from Tuesday's figures. Of this number, seven injuries were caused by stray bullets and one by firecracker poisoning.

At least 80 percent of the firecracker-related injuries were caused by people, according to the latest tally.

Studying the data, report that started on Dec. 21, Tayag said the number of firecracker-related incidents this year may surpass last year's 972 cases.

Pyrotechnical display

In Manila's City, the city government is all set for a planned concert on Friday night as a way to dissuade residents from lighting up firecrackers and invite them to watch its pyrotechnical display instead.

Celebrities and entertainers, including comedian Vice Ganda, will be performing at the concert at the Manila's Sports Park starting at 8 p.m. It will be followed by a fireworks display which is expected to brighten the sky for around 45 minutes.

"Through the concert, we encourage our residents to embrace our pyrotechnical displays instead of having their own," Dr. Guzman added.

As promised, the first 5,000 people to arrive at the concert will receive a free Noche Buena Spoon Pack that will be offered on the fireworks countdown, he said.

The city government will also be offering cash prizes, including a Samsung tablet, to lucky people.

On the morning of Friday, inflatable slides set up at the old entrance of the Manila Ocean Park Park will be offered to children for free.

"This has been a yearly tradition for the city of Manila. We want to make the seasonal celebration memorable for Manilenos," Dr. Guzman said in a statement.

Dr. Guzman echoed the advice of the DOH for everyone to have a complete and drama-free Yuletide celebration by joining community fireworks displays, street parties and concerts.

He said that in lieu of lighting firecrackers, members could make concerted effort to welcome the New Year by using tambourines, vehicle horns and the same.

With a report from Nika Calleja

From page A1

GREETING THE NEW YEAR

LOL, jiggle piggy banks, dance...

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TO GREET the New Year, laugh at the cop of your lungs, jiggle your piggy banks or stretch on the radio and break into the dance craze.

The Red Water Coalition has made a list of various ways Filipino households across the country can welcome the New Year this weekend without losing a limb from the indiscriminate use of firecrackers.

"We can avoid headline-grabbing carnage and garbage following the revelry by simply choosing personals," said Aileen Lucero, the group's "Team Pepsi Tonic" campaigner.

Kid-safe

To launch its campaign for safe New Year festivities, the group yesterday led a bunch of children in the streets of Malate, Manila, to promote "Ligtas Salubong 2012," which aims to promote a "kid-safe" celebration of the New Year.

The members of the Children's Ministry of the Lord's Harvest Church in Malate amused commuters and residents with a number of alternatives to hazardous firecrackers.

The annual collaboration between the Care for the Earth Ministry and the Healthcare Coalition since 2006 also showcased the use of creative noisemakers to safely welcome the New Year, complementing efforts of the Department of Health (DOH) to reduce firecracker-related injuries.

"New Year revelers should take shots not from those smart kids and robots from buying and letting off fireworks that could endanger the health and life of both users and non-users," said John Leydon, the parish priest.

Innovative ways

"With a little creativity, we can have a joyful celebration with our families and neighbors without causing toxic fumes and worse and fatal cries from children wounded in firecracker explosions," Leydon said.

Instead of lighting firecrackers, the DOH has been suggesting other inexpensive but innovative ways to welcome 2012 with a bang:

- Let your silents check sing or play ring tones on your mobile phones at exactly midnight.
- Play your favorite music or musical instruments or just turn on the radio.
- Jiggle "piggy banks" or "shakers" made from paper box or plastic bottles with seeds, pebbles or coins.
- Clap your hands and stamp your feet.
- Laugh at the top of your lungs.
- Do the latest dance craze, twist and shout "Happy New Year!"
- Blow Pinoy-style trumpets or "torotot."
- Make tambolitarias ("palengpeng") with a ladle to wok.
- Blow a whistle.
- Play homemade drums made of big water bottles, biscuit cans or buckets.

The DOH has repeatedly reminded Filipinos to refrain from using firecrackers to celebrate the New Year.

Communal fireworks

Health Secretary Enrique Ona has also advised households across the country to ensure communal fireworks display in their villages or town plazas to ensure that fireworks are handled by professionals.

Fireworks and firecracker-related injuries reported to the DOH during the holidays last year stood at 1,322, 1.4 percent lower than the previous year's total.

At least 24 percent of all firecracker-related injuries in 2011 involved children below 15 years old, it said. The figure surpassed injuries from blasting without ampuration (19 percent), eye injuries (15 percent), and blast injuries with amputation (8 percent).

The small, cheap and colorful "piccolo" and "bentis" were the top sources of firecracker-related injuries.

'Goodbye Gloria,' 'Pacquiao' best sellers

By Carmela Reyes

Inquirer Central Luzon

NOCAUE, Bulacan—Sheila invention has been banned on firecracker injuries again, as underground manufacturers of powerful and unlicensed firecrackers have rebranded and are selling a new product, called "Goodbye Gloria," three top sales less than three days before the New Year celebrations.

No fireworks trader here will admit selling the illegal product named after world boxing champ Manny Pacquiao, although many still seem to do business.

Because children occasionally ingest these toxic products, government recently banned phosphorous sticks like "piccolo" or the thinner "watusi" red sticks, which cause sparks when rubbed against a hard surface.

The Philippine Firecrackers, which come in the form of thick, black phosphorous sticks, are imported from China and packaged in modern package there as Bulacan sticks.

The Pacquiao and other forms of piccolo are sold in small boxes, each containing 50 black sticks. A rim of Pacquiao is equivalent to 10 boxes and is sold for P1,000 to P1,500.

The regular piccolo set of 10 boxes sells for P1,000.

There has been a high demand in the market for "Goodbye Gloria," which is sold with the sticker of the former President's face, "Ben Ladin" and "Goodbye Philippines."

Ironically, consumers lined up the stalls along the so-called Pepsi Zone in Tiaya, Bocaue, seeking these illegal products, said Ella Tolentino, a fireworks vendor.

Brisk

Sales of registered fireworks have been brisk since the Christmas weekend, those stores ended their day with P1 million in revenues, Tolentino said, adding that before Dec. 25, sales averaged between P150,000 and P350,000.

Vinnie Rivas, president of the Philippine Pyrotechnic Manufacturers and Dealers Association Inc., said the industry was not condoning the sale of illegal fireworks.

Rivas said whenever consumers sought illegal firecrackers, stall attendants had been directed to push for "bawal," unlawful fireworks that cost P350.

A 27-year old man from Bocaue was rushed by the Open Door at 12 a.m. on Wednesday looking for Grandpa Gloria and was quickly told that the licensed stalls had never sold them items, she said.

The attendant said she asked the man why he would want to buy Grandpa Gloria, "We're just serving [the former President] on line," she quoted her customer as saying.

2 dead in latest floods; 80 children in youth camp rescued

From page A1

province and Southern Leyte on Tuesday affecting more than 1,800 families. The flooding destroyed some houses, stalled traffic for hours and triggered landslides.

Worst hit areas

About 2,522 families were affected by floods in Surigao Del Norte, 2,346 families in Leyte, 138 families in Samar City and 74 families in Southern Leyte.

Among the worst-hit areas in Surigao City where more than 1,000 families from six barangays were evacuated due to a swollen Hinagdanan River, Sugar City Mayor Rafael Coro said.

Superintendent Felipe, Provincial Director PNP Production and Management Council (PPMC) action officer, said the flooding in 30 villages in Capiz province started to subside on Wednesday.

The two fatalities were identified as Janet Pascual and Fernando Vargas.

Pascual reportedly drowned while his family was on the way to evacuate at their flood prone area in Tawas Tuesday morning to escape the rampaging floodwaters that hit their village.

Swept away

Marcelo Pagsanjanan, administrator of the Leyte chapter of the Philippine Red Cross, said the boy's father was holding the victim when the floodwaters swept the boy away.

The boy's body was recovered by a rescue team, composed of the local police and members of the Red Cross, more than 10 meters away from the house at around 2 p.m. Tuesday.

The missing child was identified as April Joy Tayo, 12, from Barangay Cabul, Tanauan, Leyte.

The child was with her cousins, Rudy James Pedroso, 13; Arvin Pedroso, 12; Ricki Peladia, 11, and Marjorie Severino, 13.

Rose Advincula, of the Tanauan local disaster risk reduction and management council, said the five children were sent to swim in the sea off Barangay Santo Niño at around 11 a.m. Tuesday.

However, strong waves overwhelmed the children. The Tanauan Rescue Team rescued the four children on the same day but could not find Tayo.

Houses destroyed

In Barangay Florida in Kapalong town in Davao del Norte, four houses were destroyed as the Tuog, Hog and Hagimitan rivers overflowed, Tumbocasan said.

About 300 families were evacuated and are now temporarily sheltered at the Kapalong municipal gym, he said. A state of calamity has been declared in Kapalong.

Fely Bonilla of the Davao del Norte PDRRMC said a total of 1,762 families had been evacuated province-wide due to the floods.

Davao del Norte Vice Governor Anthony Sinaphapanan Jr. yesterday ordered the provincial social welfare and development office to send food, medicines and medical center to residents in evacuation centers in Kapalong, Asuncion and New Corella towns.

Sinaphapanan said the flooding had destroyed 328 hectares of rice lands, banana plantations and other crops in the province.

Pulangui River

In Bukidnon province, some 400 families were also isolated in their evacuation by Valencia City authorities after the Pulangui River swelled and submerged several villages in Barangay Sinoon-Alagatin, Bukidnon PDRRMC officer said.

Alagatin said some residents living on the banks of the swollen river were trapped when the water level suddenly rose. They were rescued by Philippine Air Force personnel. The townfolks started to return home yesterday.

In the Caraga region, most of the 55,781 people who fled the floods have also started returning home, according to Nicolas Odtuhan, regional director of the Office of Civil Defense.

Relief assistance is being extended to those still in evacuation centers in the run: Agusan province, two Surigao provinces and Dinagat province, Odtuhan said. "The needs of the evacuees are being addressed by concerned government agencies," she said.

In Catabato City, hundreds of residents of Pond Island—a sandbar that formed over time—have been evacuated following the swelling of the Pulangui River.

The Pulangui River is part of the system that supplies water to the Rio Grande de Mindanao, which empties into the sea off Catabato City.

Mayor Jaqui Guzmin Jr. said that apart from Pond residents, families living in the low-lying villages of Poblacion 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 were also evacuated.

The residents were temporarily housed at Catabato City Central Elementary School and at the Mega Market area.

"This is disaster preparedness in case the flood levels come at night. We don't want the experience of our neighbors in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan [which were swept by flash floods], to be repeated here," said Sara Mundac, the city's action officer.

Disaster-response teams

In Maguiz, North Cotabato province, Mayor Elren Pelal ordered village officials to activate their disaster-response teams in anticipation of landslides due to the abnormal weather pattern.

Pelal said the villages of Manuvao, Inamalang, Biao, Magcadalat, Bongakalan, Batiar, Pangao-an, Salbab and Dolot had been identified as landslide-prone areas.

He said residents living near creeks had also been warned of possible flash floods at the torrential rains. *Reports from Amy Gabinela, Carlo Roman, Bernie Cullen and Elvie Roman-Rivas, Inquirer Visayas; and Wilson Lee, Froilán Gallgadi, Gil Portillo, Gerardine Lanuza, Charlie Señas and Abraham Maghinang, Inquirer Mindanao*

OFWs may fly to Lebanon, Jordan soon

By Philip C. Tubeza and Jerry E. Esplanada

FOREIGN Affairs officials are ready to lift overseas deployment bans to Lebanon and Jordan but continue to warn Filipinos against going to protest-wracked Syria where over 60 workers are scheduled for repatriation later this week.

Carlito Cao Jr., Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) chief, said the total deployment ban to Lebanon and the ban on household service workers (HSWs) to Jordan would be lifted once Manila signs bilateral agreements with these countries to protect the rights of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

"There's a road ban for Lebanon but we are going to sign a bilateral agreement with them this summer and after that the ban will be lifted," Cao said in a news text.

"It is a labor cooperation agreement and the final draft is already finished. The signing will be done in Lebanon," he added.

Manila imposed a deployment ban to Lebanon in 2006 after fighting erupted between Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters.

"For that conflict was years ago. With this agreement, we will have guarantees that there would be improved protection for our workers," Cao said.

He said that the government was also working on a similar bilateral agreement with Jordan, where labor deployment was banned in 2008.

There have been reports that some Filipina maids in Lebanon and Jordan were treated like slaves, denied basic workers' rights to days off, and were often locked up like prisoners in their places of work.

On Monday Cao said that he also expected the deployment ban to Nigeria to be lifted by Jan. 1 as recommended by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The DFA said there were "no more kidnapping" of foreign workers [in Nigeria and it has become a "vibrant democracy."

"I think that will hold," Cao said.

The government imposed a deployment ban after the kidnapping of several Filipino workers in Nigeria between 2006 and 2009.

The POEA chief said there were 5,000 jobs available for Filipinos who want to work in the oil, gas and construction industries there. There are currently more than 7,000 Filipinos working in Nigeria.

In Syria, however, the DFA raised the crisis alert level last week in view of the escalating violence as the country is set to repatriate over 60 OFWs from Damascus. (See related story below.)

DFA spokesperson Raul Hernandez said the increase the repatriation of Filipinos to Syria was "a continuing effort of the government since April."

"Before the end of the year, more than 60 Filipinos in Syria are scheduled for repatriated to the Philippines. The Philippine Embassy in Damascus is also arranging the repatriation of another 140 OFWs from that country" said Hernandez.

So far, the DFA has been able to repatriate close to 600 OFWs" from the troubled Middle East nation, he said.

Slow OFW exit from Syria hit

A MIGRANTS rights group yesterday scored the Philippine government's "hand-picked repatriation" of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from Syria, which has been wracked by civil unrest.

Migrante Middle East regional coordinator John Leonard Monterona said the repatriation efforts of government agencies were still moving after almost a year of conflict in the troubled Middle Eastern country.

He noted that as of the second week of December, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) had only repatriated over 300 workers. "The numbers is about 1.7 percent of the 17,000 estimated numbers of OFWs in Syria, he said.

"We also note that the recall of Ambassador to Syria Wilfredo Cuyegkeng hasn't made a difference," Monterona said in a statement.

Cuyegkeng's replacement, Ambassador Bienvenido Tejidera, was supposed to be more experienced in repatriation efforts.

Monterona's suggestion to improve evacuation: repatriation job includes sending a high-level delegation to Damascus to coordinate with Syrian authorities for the mass repatriation of OFWs.

The government recently raised alert level 4 in Syria, which calls for the mandatory repatriation of all Filipino citizens.

Monterona, on the other hand, accused the Philippine embassy in Damascus of ruining the alert level system.

"There could be no timely and efficient repatriation effort by the Philippine government if in the first place there was a misreading of the peace and order situation in Syria when the conflict had just erupted and even until now," Monterona said.

Monterona urged the DFA to be more proactive in its evacuation and repatriation programs.

Philip C. Tubeza

BUDDHISTS DONATE

Members of Tzu Chi Philippines distribute blankets to victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong" in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities. The Buddhist organization also provides clothes, cooking implements and other goods to about 5,000 stricken families. The aid was donated by Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency. Those who want to make a donation may call Tzu Chi Philippines at 7329881 ext. 336 or 211, or visit their website at www.tzuchi.org.ph.

Across the NATION

Gov't permits used for illegal logs

ZAMBOANGA CITY—At least three logging companies have been using timber licenses to illegally cut trees in Lanao del Sur, according to the highest ranking officer in charge of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Mujib Hatimam, acting ARMM governor, said three companies have been issued Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMAs) by officials of Lanao del Sur.

IFMA is a contract through which government allows private firms to develop and manage tree plantations. Firms with IFMAs are also allowed to harvest trees specified in their contracts which have life spans of 25 years.

But Hatimam, who started an investigation into illegal logging activities in the region following the Dec. 17 tragedy that send the people of the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan to their knees, said IFMAs were being used to illegally harvest trees in the towns of Tagoloan, Impasugong and Sumilao.

He said he summoned three former ARMM environment secretaries—Hadji Razib Kawan, Edmundino Bathlasa and Usman Sumagpao—to explain how IFMAs became instruments of massive forest destruction in the region.

"They must explain why they allowed several companies to operate and log in some municipalities of the IFMA," Hatimam said.

Several leaders of ARMM have issued orders banning logging in the five-province region that is one of the country's poorest but most resource-rich.

When he assumed office two weeks ago, Hatimam's first move was to prohibit the issuance of new logging licenses and the cancellation of existing ones in the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Sulu.

He gave the order following a directive from President Aquino.

Hatimam said documents that his office retrieved from the start of the investigation showed that the three officials that he summoned "signed the request of those companies" to log in areas outside their assigned plantations.

Hatimam refused to identify the companies.

He said in line with the investigation, he also ordered the removal of ranking provincial, municipal and city environment officials and appointed officers in charge in their places.

Hatimam said by ordering ranking environment officials of their duties, he had removed a layer of barrier in efforts to uncover the sources of and unmask those behind illegal logging in the region.

"I don't have the list right now but I have already issued the directive last Monday," Hatimam said.

He said the relieved officials were also being investigated for their possible role in illegal logging in the region.

"Hindi-mid-like employees and other individuals can help us by reporting questionable transactions and dealings committed by their superiors. I am just a phone call or a text message away," he said. —Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

IN A SIGH that the worst of times would be over soon, residents of a village in Iligan City hang clothes and their children's favorite stuffed toys to dry as they try to load normal lives following killer floods and mudslides that devastated their communities and left hundreds of people dead.

In Bacolod, those who have nothing give more

By Carlo F Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—For the last 38 years, Fr Pedro Pasquin has been gathering the poorest of the poor every Dec. 23, hosting dinner for them with warm food and hearty laughter as his Christmas present for them in the city who could barely make ends meet.

The tragedy that befell the people of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan changed all that but opened up a rarely seen goodness in men that would have been obvious to Father Pasquin in all his years as a priest—those who have nothing material to give are all too willing to sacrifice for others.

Father Pasquin was to host dinner again for the city's poorest—beggars, garbage collectors and drivers of contraptions called "sentalado"—as he did his yearly vow.

Dec. 23 went by without the dinner, which would have been Father Pasquin's 39th gathering for the poor, but with so much hope that despite having close to nothing in life, those wallowing in poverty could still find generosity in their hearts.

Father Pasquin, rector of San Sebastian Cathedral here, said he gathers say in 150 of the city's poorest every Dec. 23 but following the Mindanao tragedy he met with a smaller group in relate to those what happened to the people of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, two cities that took the brunt of floods at the height of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

Though not surprised, Father Pasquin said he was touched by the group's decision to forego the annual dinner and instead donate the money that they would have spent on it to the victims of the storm.

Instead of the usual arrangement, there, the group—that boasted a from Father Pasquin's annual dinner made do with porridge.

"It was very moving to see recipients of charity transformed into agents of charity," said Father Pasquin. "Beggars, given the opportunity can be generous to others, too."

Generosity also flowed from the different local government units of Negros Occidental, which donated money for victims of Sendong.

This city's officials pooled a resolution that would offer P1.2 million for the storm victims.

Six towns and other cities in the province also decided to give a total of P940,000, according to Mayor David Lacson of Bill Magallanes town, head of Negros Association of Chief Executives.

The cities that give money were Cadiz, Kabankalan, San Carlos, Sipalay, Silay and Escalante. The towns were Sir Magallanes, Murcia, Hinigaran, Pontevedra, Moises Padilla, Talisaylid, Himsiman and San Enrique.

New firecracker campaign takes less combative tone

BOGOR, Bulacan—Health Secretary Enrique Ona has been frequenting the capital of the fireworks industry this month, dropping by to visit a firecracker factory on Dec. 7, and returning on Dec. 16 to light the province's giant Christmas tree in Malolos City.

He even stayed to watch the city's fireworks display.

Health officials said Ona has been active in Bulacan because he wants to populate for a travel-down version of the Department of Health's yearly anti-firecracker campaigns.

They said the new campaign is not hostile to manufacturers of firecrackers and pyrotechnics, unlike the hard line "Iwas Paputok" drive that discouraged purchase of firecrackers by displaying graphic images of firecracker victims.

In a text message to the Inquirer last week, Health Assistant Secretary Eric Tayag said: "Our worry (now) is the poor have significantly reduced (the number of injuries to just over 1,000)."

Tayag said the Department of Health (DOH) decided to improve the anti-firecracker campaign by focusing on two goals: reduce demand for firecrackers by promoting New Year traditions that use alternative noisemakers and reduce the supply of illegal firecrackers.

Children are the most vulnerable to firecracker accidents, he said.

On Dec. 7, Ona visited a firecracker factory in Barangay Dulnar and a fireworks trading zone in Barangay Taro, around 60th portion of the new "Kaya'yo Paputok (Ayo) Kalusugan (Ayo)" program that replaced the hard line "Iwas Paputok" drive.

Ona told traders DOH has decided to use Ayo as its new campaign because it is less hostile to manufacturers.

The Ayo acronym emulates the 1990s street slang, "sapuso," which refers to the "high five," a hand gesture expressing approval. Elementary school students welcomed Ona with placards. One said: "Ibenta mo ang kuwetes na 'yan!" (Sell those firecrackers!)

Mayor Edgardo Villanueva II said the DOH headed an appeal by the town government and by the Philippine Pyrotechnics Manufacturers and Dealers Inc. (PPMDAI) not to portray the firecracker industry as evil.

Vitaly Erbo, PPMDAI head, said previous anti-firecracker drives demonized the industry despite the fact that it was operating legally.

"Some firecrackers are harmful but why destroy and annul decades-old advocate tasks such as use of firecrackers," Villanueva said.

When Ayo-ana pressured in Baguio City on Dec. 7, Cordillera health officials distributed a DOH circular that encouraged local government to plan community-level firecracker displays to reduce the risk of injuries.

Dr. Rosanna Galpo, DOH Cordillera assistant director, said passing an ordinance that imposes a total ban on firecrackers and pyrotechnics is cumbersome because it translates to loss of livelihood for manufacturers and traders. —Carmela Reyes Ilarraga, Jr., Inquirer Central Luzon, with a report from Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

HEAL'TH officials hope no one fireworks, like this one in Cebu City, confined to spaces dedicated to their to prevent injuries.

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Letting the school come to the poor

By Marivar Cava

STA ROSA CITY—It's almost everything a classroom is—striking desks, plastic chairs, storybooks, careless crayons, a blackboard, a teacher who writes on the blackboard, and students who get stars stamped at the back of their hands for every correct answer.

Except that the classes are being held under a bridge, in a tent or in a basketball gymnasium.

Twice each week employees from the barangay hall of Barangay Tagapo here visit the poor communities in their village. They bring with them classroom and instructional materials loaded in a barangay patrol vehicle and tell the makeshift out ins as "learner-centered classrooms."

The project of Barangay Tagapo is called the School on Wheels or Eskwelan Sakomis Sentro Pesquian (Sow to Resq).

"If they can't come to school, let the school come to them," said Marietes Bautista, 50, the village chief of Tagapo.

Bautista, a retired teacher who also owns a private school in this city, said the project started when she observed fewer pupils enrolling each year in the government's day-care center.

"Some parents say they could not pay for the uniform and fees at the day-care center. Others, who live far from the day-care center, could not afford the tricycle fare to bring their children to school," she said.

In July 2010, the Barangay Nutrition Scholars of Tagapo identified the areas where most indigent families live. Children, ages 3-5, who have not attended day-care classes were enlisted in the program.

Railway, Riverbank

Sow to Resq classes are held in five locations—the Zamora compound in Purok 6-A, Duang Hill in Purok 6-B, Bermeview Subdivision and Arellano Village, both in Purok 2, and in Olongco Subdivision in Purok 2.

Bautista said if barangay multipurpose halls in the areas are not available, they pitch tents in basketball courts or in a private garage. In one location, they set up the blackboard, tables and chairs near the riverbank.

Each class has an average of 20 students for a total of 100 children enrolled in the program this year.

Annabel Tayone, 25, said she noticed improvements in her son James Ryan, 3, since the boy started attending the day-care class.

"He became more sociable with the other kids and less naughty at home," she said.

She said James Ryan was always excited about attending the class "he would dress himself up and remain, unlike in the (they're here) whenever he sees them setting up the chairs."

The Tayones live along the Philippine National Railway track in their area, the classes are held under the bridge.

Annabel said they could not afford to send James Ryan to a preparatory school if not for the Sow to Resq as her husband's earning of P200 a day from seasonal construction jobs is not enough for their food.

Human development

Under the program, the younger children are given work-play activities while the 5-year-olds are taught lessons on the alphabet and numbers.

A NOVEL concept to bring education to those denied as an spot by poverty unfolds in Sta. Rosa City, courtesy of the innovative ideas of officials of one of the city's villages. During one class held under a bridge, teacher Leah Alvarez gestures in front of at least 20 pupils enrolled in the program called Sow to Resq. MARIVAR CAVA

The barangay office has hired Leah Alvarez, a private school teacher, and assigned barangay health workers to assist her.

After every class, the children line up to wash their hands from a jug of water the barangay volunteers carry with them. Before this, they are given snacks of biscuit and drinks and are taught to pray before meals.

Bautista said the Sow to Resq is a human development program not only for the children but also for the parents.

"While the children attend the class, the mothers are also instilled on one side for seminars on health, child care, and livelihood such as rapi and candle-making," she said.

Bautista said the program has been sustained through a partnership with private landowners that donated the instructional materials and food.

For instance, the Library Club, a student group from Bautista's school, Holy Rosary College, now donated notebook pages into cute cows and donate them to the Sow to Resq.

The Sow to Resq is the second project submitted by Barangay Tagapo as a Best Practice program to the Galing Barangay Project of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

In 2009, Barangay Tagapo launched its Adopt-a-Lot program, which turned vacant, barren lands in Tagapo into vegetable farms and material recovery facilities. The initiative was later replicated in other villages in the city.

The Sow to Resq, Bautista said, corresponds to the mandatory kindergarten orientation of the Department of Education (DepEd). But angay officials currently arrange with DepEd officials to consider the mobile classroom program as an equivalent kindergarten course to prepare children for admission to Grade 1 in formal schools.

A CLASS OF THEIR OWN Children take part in a classroom under the bridge taken to them by the village-based program Sow to Resq—which believes that when the poor can't go to school, the school should be taken to them. The children are from poor communities in Sta. Rosa City that prioritize food over sending children to school out of sheer poverty. MARIVAR CAVA

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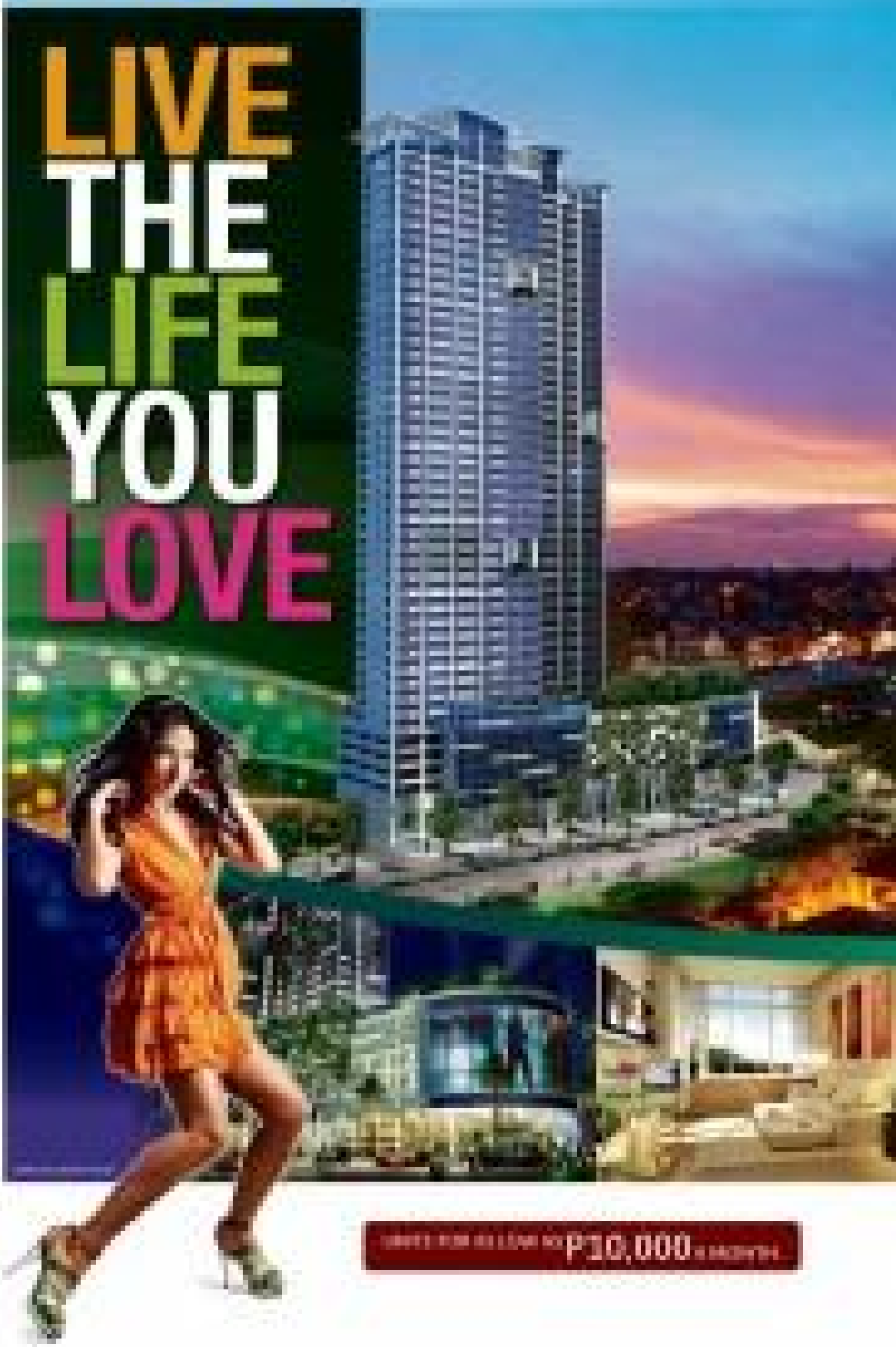

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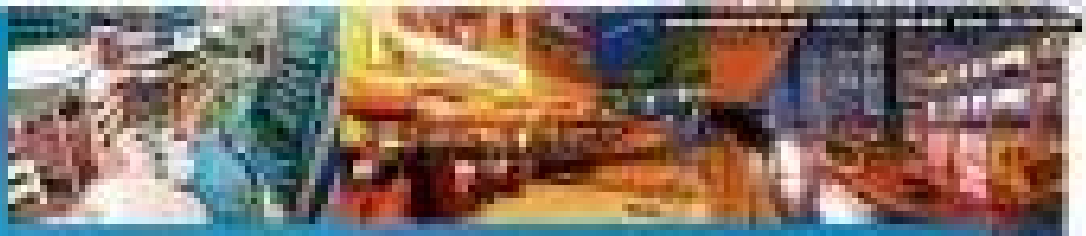

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Palparan draws support from retired generals

From page A1

plantation of the case of Gen. Palparan, who has not yet been convicted by any court of law, and his prejudice as a serial murderer, a "heritage" based on pieces of evidence that are yet to be scrutinized in due process by the court," said retired Lt. Gen. Raul Urgello, a former Army commanding general and Agila chief and president, in a statement.

"We believe that he must have the charges against him and equality in his right to be tried fairly based on facts and evidence independent of any political motivations," Urgello said.

Demobilization in the ranks

It was the first time that a military group like Agila has come out openly on the issue since the Makilala City Regional Trial Court Branch 19 issued an arrest warrant against Palparan and three Army personnel on June 29.

The generals warned of "demoralization in the soldiers' ranks" if "the ideological enemies of the state will capitalize on this issue to support their deadly political-military struggle."

"The military should not be weakened by the perception of injustice in its ranks," said Urgello, pointing out that 261 **[persons]** and the three Army personnel charged with him were charged for alleged acts committed while still in the active service "leading operations against the communist insurgents in Central Luzon."

"We request that the merits [of] the trial by publicity against Maj. Gen. Palparan, appointed by some media entities, be stopped. Let the courts determine his innocence or guilt, in fair due process. The rule of law should prevail over the demands of interest groups in the courts of public opinion," he continued.

To Palparan, his fellow generals said: "We hope that this, too, Palparan will be vindicated and begin to trust our system of justice and the people supported to the end of time."

But in other interviews, Urgello did not press for Palparan's surrender.

Presumed innocent

"That is his decision, maybe to be presumed innocent against him. Maybe that's one course of action. What we want to emphasize is that we accord a trial by publicity," he said.

He said the group spoke not to undermine Palparan's right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

"Let's not assume that he's already guilty and let's not go into a trial by publicity. He are asking for fairness," he said.

Urgello, who said he has not spoken to Palparan, said it was possible that Palparan was apprehensive that leftist groups will go after him while he is detained.

"Maybe that is the reason why he is in seclusion, but that is speculation. Our point is, it is our stand to see to it that his rights are protected," said the former Army chief.

Military or civilian custody?

Malacañang yesterday said President Aquino would ensure Palparan's safety.

But presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda could not say unequivocally whether Palparan would be placed under military custody like Lt. Gen. Carlos Garcia and Marine Brig. Gen. Dominador Aduca, instead of being detained in a ordinary jail.

Palparan is facing kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges in connection with the disappearance of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño who disappeared in Hagonoy, Bulacan province, in 2006 and have not been seen since.

"He sent surrender feelers. Presumably those surrender feelers maybe carry with them some conditions and we don't know what [those] surrender conditions are," Lacierda said.

Where are arrest duty matters

Lacierda said the government would not meet some of the Palparan supporters' demands.

Like Urgello, the lawyer has not spoken to Palparan, but it was possible that Palparan was apprehensive that leftist groups will go after him while he is detained.

"Maybe that is the reason why he is in seclusion, but that is speculation. Our point is, it is our stand to see to it that his rights are protected," said the former Army chief.

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From page A1

and the nongovernment organization Ecosystems Work for Employment and Revenues (Ewer).

Volunteers for the shelter program have started sweeping the beaches of Barangays Tibanga, Santiago, Hinaplanon and Acmac for hope that can be made into lumber.

The finished will be used to build some of the houses for thousands of families left homeless by the flooding.

Regina Ordoñez-Benitez, Ewer's executive director, said that as of Tuesday afternoon, dozens of logs had been recovered and helped into lumber by volunteers using chainsaws.

"What we intend to do is use the lumber for the reconstruction of houses instead of ending up in the hands of unscrupulous illegal loggers," Ordoñez said.

Melvin Aragon, city information officer, said some people had tried to bribe officials so they could get the logs that Typhoon Sendong washed away on Dec. 17.

"They are illegal loggers and we will pursue charges against them when the situation normalizes," Aragon said.

With the supply of lumber from recovered logs assured, the city government is hoping that the evacuation of houses in relocation sites can start immediately, Mayor Lawrence Cruz said.

"We are moving fast and we want the problem solved soon. We have identified and acquired relocation sites," he said.

Cruz said that based on government figures some 6,000 homeless families had been included in the program's initial phase.

He said thousands claimed to have lost their homes in the floods. "Some of them appeared to be just pretending. That's why we are validating their claims," he said.

Cruz said Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman had pledged shelters for other victims who could not be accommodated in the local resettlement program.

In Cagayan de Oro City, displaced residents of the second congressional district may have to spend two more months in tent cities before they can move to their new homes, which are being jointly built by the government and good Samaritans.

Houses finished in Feb.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said the construction of the houses for fleeing victims could be finished in February. The houses are being built on a 4-hectare lot in Barangay Lima and are a 30-ha phase of property in Barangay Dahilag.

Sebastian also here also been identified in Barangays Landia and Cabantian for those who need to live on the western bank of the Cagayan River, Rodriguez said.

The Jesuit-owned Xavier University has granted the government southeast rights to its 5-ha property in Barangay Lumbia.

Ebenezer is the legal right granted to a person or entity to use and derive profit or benefit from property that other belongs to another person or which is under consumer ownership, as long as the property is not damaged or destroyed.

Cagayan de Oro Councilor Nadiya Emano said the city had also allocated 9 ha in Barangay Calaanan for the relocation of Sendong victims.

Generosity

The property, she said, was part of the 44 ha area that the city government bought in 1996 for its resettlement purposes.

Emano said a Chinese-Filipino businessman, who wished to remain anonymous, offered to bankroll the building of as initial 300 houses in Calaanan for storm victims.

The businessman has offered to build about a total of 1,000 houses on the property, she said.

Killer logs to build homes, to rebuild lives for homeless

From page A1

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'PH rises from grave of corruption' with savings of ₱42 billion

From page A1

Filipinos yesterday

Mr. Aquino assured that the new year would not be gruesome not only continuing with the reforms it had started but also bringing more tremendous changes.

The President thanked the nation for its support and faith in him.

"We will not be tripped up by those who continue to take advantage of the Filipinos," he said.

2011 achievements

In an interview with the ABS-CBN television network, Mr. Aquino said his government had generated ₱42 billion in savings as of September.

The President pointed out the said billion savings as one of the achievements of his government in 2011.

Mr. Aquino also said his administration had created "roughly" 2.1 million new jobs as of October, citing a labor force survey.

According to the President, the ₱42 billion of the savings came from the interest payments saved after the country was given a credit upgrade by international credit rating agencies like

"There's at least 11 (billion) which might grow to about 34 billion....I'm sorry if I have an error of a billion here or there....but roughly those are the figures resulting from interest rate savings," Mr. Aquino told ANC.

"We're inching closer and closer to investment grade but it has already impacted on how much we have to pay for the loans we do have. We've been able to replace the higher interest rate with cheaper interest rates," he said.

Standard and Poor's earlier this month raised the outlook on the Philippine sovereign debt from "stable" to "positive," boosting the country's chances of getting a credit rating upgrade next year. Moody's Investors Service assigned a "stable" outlook on the banking sector, saying the country's banks can be expected to benefit from a favorable business environment in the short term.

Where savings went

The savings have funded, among others, the ₱5 billion-peso augmentation of the calamity fund in the aftermath of Tropical Storm "Sendong" and the more than a billion pesos needed for the Christmas bonuses of government workers.

Another source of substantial savings was the increase in tax production which decreased the need to import the staple, Mr. Aquino said.

"We saved something like ₱7.7 billion from (having) less importation," he said.

Tightening the procedures in the use of funds for infrastructure resulted in ₱6 billion in savings from the Department of Public Works and Highways, he said.

"According to the figures available to us, as of mid September, we saved something like ₱42 billion pesos....of that, ₹6 billion came from public works," the President said.

He explained that whenever there is corruption or "anomalous" negligence of funds, now with procedures being tightened, the result was about 5% billion in savings.

"For instance, before if there was ₱200 million for a road, it would be realigned to another project. The jobs is bad and because of the anomalous practices, the road is only quality and let's say quotas a total by publicity. We are asking for fairness," he said.

Urgello, who said he has not spoken to Palparan, said it was possible that Palparan was apprehensive that leftist groups will go after him while he is detained.

"Maybe that is the reason why he is in seclusion, but that is speculation. Our point is, it is our stand to see to it that his rights are protected," said the former Army chief.

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"He sent surrender feelers. Presumably those surrender feelers maybe carry with them some conditions and we don't know what [those] surrender

RENE BERE Alfonso Tagliaferri, deputy head of mission of the Embassy of Italy in Manila, turns over to DSWD Region X Director Arnaldo P. Salcedo in Wednesday some 40 box of relief goods and equipment as donation in memory of Tropical Storm "Sendong" in Cagayan de Oro City on Dec. 15. RENE BERE / INQUIRER MINDANAO

From page A1

compact [of the new campaign] should be introduced at a specific time and I would yet want to disrupt that plans," he said.

The way Mr. Aquino figured it, such course that comes to the country's image in about 11 days and with Transportation Secretary Mar Roxas's new target of 1 million jobs a year, the country will be getting 15 million more jobs from the present figure of about 2 million.

He said the publicity generated by the Jessica Sanders of Nature campaign has also increased the tourism rates seen to see the Banaue rice terraces/Underground River.

Palawan's prime tourist draw was chosen as one of the provincial winners of the global poll to choose seven new wonders of nature.

According to Mr. Aquino, he was informed by Palawan Gov. Sabas Abas that there has been so much interest in the underground river that the provincial government has had to set up a scheduling system for those wishing to see it.

"There are limits on human traffic so that the natural wonder won't be damaged [so they are already saying there is a substantial increase in arrivals, which also introduces these tourists that they have accommodated down to the other attractions of Palawan.... I'm very very excited about that," he said.

New export product

He said another possible revenue source for the Philippines was an "organic produce export

Excited by tourism

The President said he was also excited about the new promotion campaign of the Department of Tourism.

"Unfortunately, I have [inadvertently] on the Anniversary of Sendong's position that each

Other factors

But there were other factors contributing to the slow growth like developments in the global economy like the effects of the tsunami and earthquake in Japan last March and the credit crisis in Europe and in the United States.

We regret the slowdown in the economy, I keep emphasizing that's part of the reason but the other part is that we are not doing anything to isolation. Pillay [would've predicted that Japan would have such a problem] but there others," Mr. Aquino said.

"They are all our major trading partners. And of course, to the Middle East the increase in the price of crude, the uncertainty—it's not yet over. Now there's an issue in Syria. All these have effects," Mr. Aquino said.

Foreign arrivals this year top 2010 figures, says immigration bureau

By Jerome Aning

MORE than 3.5 million foreigners visited or entered the country this year, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) reported yesterday.

Immigration Commissioner Ricardo David Jr. in a statement said that as of Dec. 26, a total of 3,500,647 foreigners had entered the country, 126,879 more or 3.75 percent higher than the 3,452,688 who arrived from January to December last year.

They arrived at different ports of entry but mostly at those at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the country's premier port.

David said the numbers would climb further as the figures do not include arrivals from Dec. 27 to 31.

He said the year's arrivals included tourists, investors, expatriates, students and balikbayans (those of Filipino extraction) with foreign passports.

The immigration bureau said the number of foreign arrivals despite the travel advisories issued in late 2010 by foreign governments warning their citizens against going to the Philippines due to terror threats. Last June, the United States issued another travel advisory against the Philippines, warning of likely terror attacks.

Acting BI immigration operation chief Danilo Almeda said that, based on the statistics, the advisories "did little to dampen foreigners' interest in the Philippines."

Almeda also said that in the same period, returning Filipino travelers totaled 3.02 million, bringing the total number of international travelers who arrived this year to more than 7.4 million.

Almeda's showed that Russians topped the list with 662,864 arrivals, followed by 597,080 Americans, 573,535 Japanese, 277,793 Chinese, 171,944 Australians, 155,696 Taiwanese, 135,339 Britons, 129,802 Canadians, 84,361 Malaysians and 69,329 Singaporeans.

MAKATI TO ACCEPT DONATIONS FOR 'SENDONG' VICTIMS AT NEW YEAR'S EVE COUNTDOWN

It's all systems go for the Makati New Year's Eve Countdown on Ayala Avenue and Mayor Jejomar Erwin S. Binay is encouraging residents and all those who will attend the event to give donations for the victims of typhoon "Sendong."

"We want to encourage people to share their blessings to our less fortunate brothers who were victims of typhoon Sendong. Let us start 2012 with hope and faith that things will get better," Binay said.

The city will set up donation booths at the venue to accept donations in cash or in kind. Donors will receive souvenirs and party favors as well as raffle tickets.

Earlier, the city government released P6-million as donation for Sendong victims.

Meanwhile, at least 13 units of Blackberry phones, three iPad units, and a P1-million grand prize are among the prizes to be raffled off to participants during the countdown party on December 31.

"We are inviting everyone to join us in welcoming the New Year with fresh resolve and energy buoyed by a blooming hope that a better future awaits the nation," Binay added.

The stage and everything is set for the grand event, which will be capped by a 15-minute spectacular pyro-musical show to usher in the New Year.

The "Magical, Musical Makati 2012" countdown party will feature the music tracks of Jeffrey Tam and an array of entertainers led by The Dawn, The Company, Antimano Band, Bloom Brothers, Silk Band, and many more surprise performances.

The raffle draws will be held in between the performances, and lucky winners will surely be thrilled to walk away with brand new Blackberry and iPad units, while the big steal will be the New Year's first millionaire.

More performers, clowns and fire dancers will add a more festive air to the event, which is expected to outshine the previous countdowns in the city.

Six first-rate hotels in the city – the Makati Shangri-La, Dusit Thani, Mandarin Oriental, Peninsula Manila, Intercontinental and New World Hotel – were tapped to offer their New Year menus in the VIP guests during the countdown party to be streamed at the intersection of Ayala and Makati avenues.

Meanwhile, food booths of traders from the Ayala Center, Salcedo Weekend Market, and many other satellite chain outlets will provide the revellers with a wide variety of Manila Noche choices for the traditional New Year's Eve meal.

The Makati New Year's Eve Countdown is supported by Ayala Land, Inc. and Makati Commercial Estate Association (MAKEA).

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

People's manhunt

EDITORIAL

IT TOOK all of five and a half years to get the wheels of justice turning against Jovito Palparan, and now they seem to have ground to a halt—but we hope, very briefly.

The retired Army major general is one of the principal accused in the disappearance of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, both students of the University of the Philippines, who were abducted in Bulacan in June 2006 allegedly by soldiers belonging to the 7th Infantry Division then headed by Palparan. The student activists were suspected of being members of the communist New People's Army.

Palparan and three of his subordinates were charged with various offenses before the Bulacan Regional Trial Court, and government prosecutors approved the filing of kidnapping and serious illegal detention last Dec. 16, fueling the prospect of being finally brought before a court of law. Palparan declared with characteristic bravado that he would not run or hide but answer the charges in court. "Why should I hide?" he said. "It is useless to hide. I just want a speedy trial." Two days later, he had his bags packed and he was ready to go to Singapore. Immigration agents, citing a search-list order issued by the Department of Justice, barred him from leaving at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport. That was the last time authorities saw him.

The day after Palparan's aborted flight, Judge Teodora Gonzales issued a warrant for his arrest. But by then the genie of the said document had already begun, with the accused apparently outsmarting the car until now. Palparan has been thrilling government officials with offers of surrender, only to leave them frustrated. First he sent feelers to the National Bureau of Investigation, then to the Department of Justice, and finally to the Philippine National Police. Nothing came of these overtures, and red-faced law-enforcement officials have been reduced to speculating that Palparan must still be in the country and pleading that he turn himself, or warning that the long arm of the law would reach him anytime. President Aquino himself could not set a deadline for the fugitive's capture but just gave the assurance that "given enough time, and perhaps very soon, you will see positive results."

How soon is "very soon," we can in good reason ask apparently can say. In the meantime, the Armed Forces has announced that it would join the hunt for the man the activists called "Butcher," a welcome sign that the military may be turning away from the practice that made Palparan some kind of model or hero in the anti-communist campaign. However getting the military involved could also mean that our law-enforcement agencies are making little progress in its efforts to find Palparan.

It was probably a mistake for anyone to believe that Palparan would keep his word in the first place. Etta Rosales, chair of the Commission on Human Rights, says authorities should not trust him because his whole record showed he cannot be trusted. "He had no accountability," she said. "He took shortcuts to do his job. He violated human rights."

Now law-enforcement officials seem to agree that Palparan cannot be taken at his word. They have put up a P500,000 reward for any information that would lead to his capture. The idea apparently is to encourage people to get actively involved in the hunt.

But with or without the reward, Filipinos should get involved. Palparan is not just the accused abductor of two students; he represented the worst of the anti-communist hard-liners in the military organization and lived by the principle that the AFP has "the authority to terrorize the bad elements of society." Once he got into a position of authority, he unleashed a reign of terror wherever he was assigned, especially in Mindoro, in Samar and in Central Luzon. The victims attributed to him directly or indirectly really surpass 1,000 cases, 700 of them to his last assignment, which was Central Luzon. And these crimes cover the whole spectrum of human rights violations from forced disappearances to murder, from rape to torture.

If ever there was someone who deserved to be called an enemy of the people, it must be Palparan. Bringing him to justice for the Cadapan and Empeño kidnapping will be a big first step toward finding justice for the thousands who disappeared or who died via extrajudicial executions in the hands of official agents of the law. And if that is what is required to find him, then everyone should join in what an alliance of human rights advocates calls a people's manhunt for Palparan.

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Rizal and modernity

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

Last Dec. 12, I spoke at the lecture series organized by the University of the Philippines in Los Baños to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Dr. Jose Rizal. This is an abridged version of the lecture I gave.]

JOSE RIZAL, our national hero, is sometimes referred to as the "first Filipino." Though his life was short, he was certainly a Filipino without equal in the varied gifts and talents that he possessed. He was thus truly first among equals. And he was also the first of his generation to self-consciously claim the term "Filipino" as an identity. Before that, the native inhabitants of this country were called "Indios," while "Filipino" was used to designate Spaniards born in the Philippines.

To me, however, Rizal was, more than anything else, the first Filipino modern. He did not only subscribe to the power of scientific reason, he also believed in the basic equality of cultures. And, for him, this equality applied as well to religion, which is why he was an early advocate of the freedom of religious belief against the party's archaic norms of bridal culture. He also thought that women should have the same opportunities as men to develop themselves.

Rizal was especially critical of the racial supremacy that underpinned Western colonialism. In countless essays, he not only disputed the European claim to superiority, he also urged his fellow Filipino expatriates in Europe to always conduct themselves as the equals of the inhabitants of the countries in which they lived. Every achievement of every Filipino in Europe in any field was to him one more proof of the universality of genius. He particularly applauded Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo for the prizes they won in art competitions abroad.

"Luna and Hidalgo," he told a gathering in honor of these two painters, "are Spanish as well as Philippine glories. They would have been in the Philippines but they would have been born in Spain, because genius knows no country, genius spouts everywhere, genius is like light, it comes Commonwealth, it runs much more southern rail light and waits for another minute and a half while the other side of Taft-ing Sun across Commonwealth subside to continue. There's waits for another half minute for those morning left. On a bad day, it could take those who have left on foot just to get through that short stretch of road.

The system is a classic example of inconsiderate thinking, a really elaborate way to do things with extraordinary results. It's like the jobs about how many lawyers, or engineers, or professors it takes to change a light bulb. The answers range from five to 20 depending on the profession. When in fact you need only one.

What is the solution?

I guess. Specifically, removing that intersection and rerouting it across on Commonwealth Avenue to the right of Tandang Sora on opposite ends.

There's a side story here, which is that those stretch of road has been long due for widening. The bed of Tandang Sora going all the way to Quezon is has already been so. Only that stretch remains untouched, courtesy of "influential settlers," also known as squatters, that have caused demolition. That's one place, along with the one beside Trinoma, that has the problem in the traffic-light. When it moves red, the vehicles on Tandang Sora that is about to cross Commonwealth stop. When it stops, all the vehicles behind it stop as well, triggering the effects described above. Before you know it, the direct accumulation of moving vehicles serve to be a nasty tangle, till that comes from that one vehicle that has stopped before the red light.

There's an immediate relief for that one vehicle—just once the light turns green. Soon as it

Conrado de Quiros

Roads

THERE'S THE RUB

IT'S A classic case of how to do everything wrong.

That's the stretch of Tandang Sora between Capitol Hills Drive and Commonwealth Avenue. If you've been driving from UP to Commonwealth through that road in past months, you'll have to have heard the traffic there is. If you've been driving there over the last couple of weeks, the pit of the Christmas season, you'll know that the phrase is thoughts are the not the things that will fill your head while stranded there.

Last year, things were pretty tight and loosey there. You'd have a bit of traffic every now and then, particularly during rush hour, but nothing that would you down to a crawl. Things flowed more or less easily, notwithstanding that jeepneys, as is their wont, stopped everywhere, or zoomed in the most inconvenient spots. And notwithstanding that motorcycles appeared always, materializing at your side in a flow like a flash flood.

Then they put up a traffic light at the intersection of Tandang Sora and Commonwealth, and everything worked.

Even on Sundays, particularly this past month, traffic is a nightmare. A long queue would form before Commonwealth all the way to Capitol Hills Drive. Those coming to attend it would have to a neighboring road, which, once everyone would be thinking the same thing, would soon fill up too and turn into another huge parking lot. To ease things, or prevent the usual confusion from making things worse by escaping opposite lanes, cops would be strewn in the area to manage traffic.

So when you come to think about it, the matter is really simple.

What is the problem?

The problem is the traffic light. When it turns red, the vehicles on Tandang Sora that is about to cross Commonwealth stop. When it stops, all the vehicles behind it stop as well, triggering the effects described above. Before you know it, the direct accumulation of moving vehicles serve to be a nasty tangle, till that comes from that one vehicle that has stopped before the red light.

There's an immediate relief for that one vehicle—just once the light turns green. Soon as it begins to move, the vehicles behind it begin to move, and the jam slowly but surely begins to ease.

The solution is to remove the traffic light altogether. Let the vehicles on Tandang Sora flow freely, and let those coming from Commonwealth Avenue do the same. Put up a sign that says "Yield" to those coming from Commonwealth Avenue, and let those coming from Tandang Sora proceed as they please.

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2011: Annus horribilis

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

PRESIDENT AQUINO partying, guzzling over one bottle of Concepcion's rather, while at least 1,200 Filipinos just drowned in a typhoon in Mindanao and 60,000 lost their homes; captures the ethos of the past 12 months: a horrible year of natural and man-made disasters, with an incompetent or uncaring national leadership's mind elsewhere.

Five destructive typhoons hit the country with the fifth the most horrible, Tropical Storm "Sendong" in December. No government's disaster preparedness and management mechanism functioned this year to be a hanging over.

Eight to wield his presidential powers, Mr. Aquino fired in August 2010 the head of the wealthy forecasting agency for allegedly failing to predict the destructiveness of Typhoon "Basyang"—as per his boss's whim, appointing someone of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

But he's one thing his own appointees or his cabinet officials who panicked up government's typhoon forecasting and disaster management this year. Officer-in-charge Department of Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman, a nun, was the Department of Agriculture, as she was spread by this paper, it was "common sense" that they be the ones best to invest in cult of flooding.

One would be surprised to learn that it is Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo who heads the crucial agency National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), since it has been an obscure, inanimate retired general who has been the face of the national leadership in times of disaster—an indication symptomatic of this government's priorities.

Gemmy perhaps could be excused for being too busy confronting the country's two main problems. However, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has never been so tasked around by insurgencies as it has been this year.

In August, Mr. Aquino staged his "historic" peace meeting with Moro Islamic Liberation Front leaders in Tokyo. Two months after the MILF massacred 19 Special Forces troopers in an ambush in Basilan, this deed [illegible], reflected another in my mind to Zamboanga, killing five soldiers. Weeks after, other MILF platoons defiantly roamed Central Mindanao, while the Army ordered alleged MILF lair empty—incorrect, except for a single MILF insurgent responsible for the massacre has been caught or killed.

The communist New People's Army had earlier vowed that this administration had had the NPA's hands against insurgents. On Sept. 27, it attacked and bombed a banana plantation in Surigao del Norte, by the Japanese multinational Yamamoto Fruits Corp. A few days later, it pillaged, within a three-hour period, three mining companies in Surigao del Norte. The day after Mr. Aquino attended the APEC summit in Honolulu, the NPA in the Visayas' largest island, Negros, was the scene of the insurgencies, the MILF, embedded an Army "peace and development team," killing five soldiers.

However, Mr. Aquino was there to learn...even there is light, the People's Republic of China for addressing as the country whose lair we are in these Philippine Sea. China exercised this year how CPPNs corrected for drug-smuggling.

The term "culture of impunity" has come in to most positively describe the crime wave in the country, from the still-unsolved bombing of a bus in Makati in January which has four people were killed, to the still-blended murder in November of Zamgera Bautista, son of former Sen. Santanina Rasul, and, to close the year, the murder of an American military in Tagaytay. Veteran politician Emerson Mercado was killed last January, and still unknown for his motivations weekly chronicling of the upsurge of crimes in these cities.

While his troops and the police are the salted, Mr. Aquino has devoted his energies in his assaults against his predecessor former President Arroyo and her alleged allies.

In February, Mr. Aquino's lynch mob in Congress and in media, fired up by accusations made by retired Col. George Rabusa...who had been charged with smuggling P58 million in ill-gotten wealth by the Ombudsman, one back in 2005—led Senate's Senior Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to commit suicide. In April, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, with no money for her legal and media defense, had no choice but to huddle under Mr. Aquino's undies, and resign.

In December, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima and Comelec Chairperson Sixto Brillantes headed a supposedly constitutionally independent body, practically spit at the graves of the 58 victims of the 2009 Maguindanao massacre by pushing into their service the prime suspect's underling, Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo's decision of their actions. Gen. Soliman—a nun—ordered the Interior's order elevating in the 2007 elections for her senatorial slate—in the only basis for the arrest of a former president. With the threat of being indicted for causing those charged for the massacre dismissed, Gloria Arroyo was released after when a judge believed his claim that he ordered the arrest of a former president, who is now a sitting member of the House of Representatives.

Amnesty would for President Aquino's planning to clear his own illegal wiretapping case. Aquino has become the most powerful man in the country, this September—unlike his mother—couldn't do anything to save the three very kingdom. Justice de Lima, which the Supreme Court ruled should be independent, has been reduced to be Aquino's lapdog.

De ano? So? So the year drew to a close, the anger President invited a lynch mob against the Court, and ordered the House of Representatives to impeach its head Chief Justice Renato Corona. Che's just for starters. Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda boasted that 19 more justices would be impeached.

All these and finally, while crucial infrastructure projects slowed down, poverty worsened, and the economy decelerated from 6.9 percent growth in the first quarter to 3.9 percent in the third quarter.

E-mail: rigoberto.tiglao@gmail.com

'In memory of Jose Rizal'

IT ALL began when I was asked to handle Rizal course and it dawned on me that I was not the best person for the job. Nevertheless, I accepted the assignment and proceeded to search for course materials that would ease me into teaching the course. I did not like the subject myself because, unfortunately, in my

YOUNG BLOOD

Jani Lorenzo Gonzalez-Alegado

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the [illegible]

THEY SAID

Unusual

"It is not at all unusual for the executive branch to disagree with the judicial branch. But what is considerably unusual is for the Chief Executive to look down on the members of the judiciary in public... and to [last] harm [illegible]"

Enough is enough

"I know there was an easy way out of this...to idolize or to resign. If resign, maybe there would be peace for me and the media thrown at me would cease. But after a long and deep reflection, I told myself, 'Is this really how it should be?' That if someone wants something, he could really get it! I thought it was time for me to say that enough is enough."

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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'The man who planted trees'

I WROTE the piece below for this space 20 years ago, in 1991 (with a different title). I share this again to honor those who have been guarding our forests with their lives, in memory of the three monks (Antonio Lobo) dead and "lives [and] left missing" who perished in the Dec. 16 flash floods, landslides and log slides that scarred into parts of Southern Mindanao and the Visayas, and in solidarity with the grieving, hungry, homeless and hopeless.

Tropical Storm "Sendong" is not entirely to blame. Earth outshoes have been crying out to the wilderness, admitting to the proverbial locusts and wild honey, unbowded in their own overbegone country.

While re-working this piece I was listening to the Dire Straits, "The Romance of Tone" and think of how we have to learn to live provisional so that that of destruction. —Jose "The Man Who Planted Trees"

It story I read as a little girl and which I remember very well to this day. (In fact the copy is still preserved in my home in the province.) As that of Johnny Appleseed. I remember his emergent of a cap, his bright eyes and the label of apple seeds he carried around wherever he went.

Children keep things in their hearts and remember even when they become adults. After them we have a little boy named Johnny and I felt reading that picture story on the Justice Chester B. Jamison. How Johnny Appleseed made the bare fields bloom and when he was old, how he marveled at the work of his hands and how he died a happy man and how the birds in the apple trees chirped his name long after he was gone.

I remember as I go over this same little book

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

which my friend, a former, lent to me. The book, "The Man Who Planted Trees," comes with audiotext and pictures which can be played while you're reading the book. Listening and reading—slowly and [illegible]—takes 40 minutes. (This is now on YouTube.) The story is by Jean Giono, the illustrations (each exquisite wood engravings) by Michael McCurdy. A recorded track added, Giono has written a short story in French, the book's original title.

The name of the man who planted trees is Elzeard Bouffier. Giono said the purpose of his story "was to make people love the tree, or more precisely, to make them love planting trees." Though Giono, my kind, Elzeard Bouffier before the outbreak of the First World War. Others say the one's end, then again before the outbreak of the Second World War and finally at the end of it.

Giono, the storyteller, describes where he first met Bouffier. "About 40 years ago I was taking a long step on foot over mountains heights, quite un-known to tourists, in that ancient region of the Alps that dared down into Provence. All this, at the time I embarked upon my long walk through those deserted regions, was buried colorless land, hashing gave those but wild lavender."

In this god-forsaken land lived Bouffier, "a man of great solitude and self-confidence," who, after he had lost his wife and children, traveled to this desolate place in southern France. With only his dog and sheep for company he started his monumental work—planting 4 hundred acres every day of his life.

It is Giono who tells us about the transformation of the region—from a sonic and wasteless area

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

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The power of China's powerless

LONDON—SO, sooner had I finished reading an article than eulogized Václav Havel, the playwright turned dissident turned peaceful revolutionary turned president who had just died, than two well-respected news sources—the Associated Press and Reuters—were to announce the death of Kim Jong-il, North Korea's pornography-addicted and unclear-armed supreme leader, and the peaceful process against him and corporations by the villagers of Wukan in Guangdong province, south China.

If there's ever had any moments of doubt about his lasting positive impact on the world, I hope he was able to see reports from Wukan before he died. In that fishing village of 6,000, the "power of the people" has been so powerful as to cause to indomitable totalitarian rule was demonstrated anew and with such enormous dignity and discipline that it has galvanized China like no other protest since those in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989.

Kim, in a sense, is the last of the Communists. He made not only material mistakes, but even the moral disastrous concern his base a country in managed. His death made me recall that of Mao Zedong with all the mass hysteria—real and [illegible]—that accompanied the demise of a self-anointed god.

But Mao's death did at least call the era of communism in China. Because he had no son to succeed him, Mao appointed a five-person politburo to do the job. Its members, which included his nephew Mao Yuanxin, his relatives, Zhang Tiefeng, and Jiang Qing, his last wife—were an incongruous set governing an Kim, his following the disasters of the Cultural Revolution, antagonistic to those in the diplomacy and other areas. Mao's nephew was too widespread for them to last. They and the Gang of Four [of which Jiang Qing was a member], were soon ousted.

China's transition from communism is desperate, and there is no illusion of capitalism. Has been fortunate for China's citizens. South Korea's bad luck is that, despite his incompetence, Kim Jong-il seems to have managed to bequeath the dynasty he inherited to his youngest son, Kim Jong-

Ma Jian

un. Given either North Korean institutions' apparent indifference to the news that the Kims have made of their country, there seems scant chance of any serious change of course being initiated from within, a fight [illegible], however, might yet upset the end of the regime.

North Korea is a kind of looking glass world in Orwell's dictum that, to survive under totalitarian rule, one must live in it. Fortunately for Orwell, it was fictional world, and readers of his novels were also small minded to that fact. But when every aspect of society is built, as in North Korea, on a big lie, and than on Even Bigger Lie, it is probably hard to maintain one's sanity let alone the ability to live in truth.

In any case, Kim Jong-un's reign is unlikely to last or be as terribly cruel as those of his father and grandfather. Communism, thanks to the fate of successful state-led economies and the rising standards by people like Russia's, has proven to be under such external strain that Kim Il Sung nowhere to turn for effective help. Indeed, even the two regimes most eager to maintain the Kim dynasty—China's and Russia's—are feeling pressure from their own people. And, in new sense, not so powerless populations.

In Wukan, simple villagers were unafraid to challenge the might of the local party and police when officials stole their land for a development project. In March, policemen have put down the arrests demanding that human rights be protected. In Indian, hundreds of thousands of people protest against the construction of a petrochemical plant. Unlike what has happened so far in Wukan, the Indian protest was avoided, but it...like the rest of thousands of other protests across China last year—signaled to the ruling party that ordinary Chinese are no longer motivated only in the politically passive pursuit of economic gain.

In Russia, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's situation is much the same. Following the sham elections in early December, massive protests erupted in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. And those people have not been cowed by the [illegible] subtle tension, but Russia's new middle classes. Like the villagers of Wukan, they have simply had enough of official dishonesty.

North Koreans have suffered worse for a long time, and, although they are to be marshaled to be docile and loyal to Kim's dynasty, we just cannot imagine how they will remain at the back and call of Kim Jong-un, who has no credentials, military or otherwise, to rule. Given to increasingly violent outbursts of temper, as his father was, Kim's internal conflict becomes acute. China may find it difficult to behave toward Kim Jong-un with anything but cold and anxiety-ridden indifference.

And would that it was indifference to the west. Where the European communist regimes on the part of Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet forces that ultimately sealed their fate and delivered Havel from a prison cell to Prague Castle, Israel, of course, was a beneficiary of such indifference. Now, he has grown accustomed to remaining a fighter for truth and freedom throughout his life.

For Chinese concerned about how to live in truth, Havel remains our exemplar. The Charter 77 movement that he co-founded provided the template for the Chinese democracy movement. Former Liu Xiaobo, who helped to found Charter 08, which proclaimed that Chinese, too, could live in dignity and freedom.

But Jong-il's demise reminds us that all people are equal before the truth. Havel's passing reminds us that the value of life will eventually gain support.

Project Syndicate

Ma Jian's latest novel is "Beijing Coma."

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.net, ph; together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Jani Lorenzo Gonzalez-Alegado, 22, is a part-time faculty member of the University of San Jose-Recoletos.

Higher than positive law

ROBERT ROSS Tigbas ninth class 11 Abbey elected not have left his ailing mom to seize money for his partisan needs; 2) Due to ideological, foreign political not have seven terms in the Senate; and 3) she should when Business tonight's reported mon- ner that a Dominican Republic aware first to Mindoro saw her on Oct. 26, 2011 to discuss her partisan request?

Did her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo Jr., really Lolo de Lilia? I don't think so—she must be loyal) to how everything, including life itself, for her motivations. I edited my thesis last year on whether military would remain in San Beda, where Claver taught for years, supervise and by example, does user there is the law, whether we should all obey him there (no "higher law" no, to which the more positive one more than). Sir Ijino is- studied Saint Beda when I was not on the- ply, but I am not the only there coaching in his common studies first attempt.

John Sandpiper, Rizal and Agatan, Thomas, Pentecostes, Castillo, Rosa Nebo, Mamie Lubao King, Muhammad Ali, Silver Aquino, Sonny Tañada, Pepe Diokno, Ed Duggan, Sunday Ruero, et al., who elevated human rights and democracy to a new level, were to a higher law in case of conflict. The Philippines treats the law is the command of the sovereign, while we, in natural Law may, from time to time, "interpret."

I think the modern doctrine like the Cardinal rewrite who accepted as law anything than called itself by that name and was passed or promulgated supreme to protect citizens, is the reason why Marcos and re- martial law was proclaimed and kept blessing his Supreme Court, 2) our Arroyo and her Supreme Court, from 2001 to date. I urged a tax holiday in 2005, when Gani, as you defiance law I was ready to face the consequences. I was ignored. Because short Justices have gone down in history while Emilio Aguinaldo and possible Reina Corona, stay put godsend.

I tell my students about a higher law and the need to do the right thing in the right way at the right time and for the right reasons. Are Justices who could say no to the multiple appointments of Gloria—despite the language and spirit of the Constitution found on the twilight and midnight appointments of President Corazon de Aquinapaz (for your love from Lubao who became the sick man in Pedro) ex- cuse this disregarded and unfaith—may be a menace to the rule of law.

The Supreme Court should have heard government, as much as cited to the gov- ion is a Arroyo, before passing that "Bill Who was GMA wearing boots in the ar- ports (which Congress approved before Arroyo left President Gov't) opposed? Arroyo exhausted Clark on her own, le- gerating Congress, which could have re- named it after Arroyo, Tañada and Diokno, but instead settled for Corazon Clark.

The weakened Judiciary is easy, to a measure. The closed proceedings a dynam- ic and resolves information from all cor- ners, while considering height, and can be- come Dr. Lolo's right cross without a court order.

Does an oath bind a badly-elected (with "fairness"? Or the all-knowledge?

How long will the Arroyos continue to abuse our patience?

—JOSE SATURNO,
revsher@gmail.com

Selecting SC members

I DON'T understand why some people are connecting the whole Architect to the legal proceedings of the impeachment of Chief Justice Renato Corona as if the impeach- ment were an offense to the Judiciary. In fact, it's the other way around. It is embarrassing to know that our politicians and governors, some officials are condoning from their in- fluences and some are the injustice, bias, arrogance and ignorance of magistrates, especially those of Corona and the other oppressive justices and judges of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The right of Corona's ballot supporters singing million-dollar questions and answers to protect the impeachment was traumatiz- ing. Why aren't they protesting against the many bad lawmen in their own back- yards...like corrupt judges, lawyers, police- men members, etc. many of us in the same offices were just laughing at those in the tri- b- because we knew that the impeachment of Corona is a step in the right direction, a step in the right direction, a step in the right direction, a step in the right direction.

The politicians are right in making that move. But who won't dare include the sick- ex- misleading lawyer appointees and their advocates in the new Supreme Court chief justice and associate justices be re- ed by the people through referendum, so that we can be assured of impartial deci- sions by our courts. President Aquino should have no hand in appointing them.

—DONALD O'HARA,
emailtodonald@hotmail.com

Premium hike: Philhealth welcomes feedback

THE IS in reaction to the news item titled "20% bah hike in Philhealth rate," (Inquirer, 12/21/11) After as to address the key points raised by OFW organizations in the newsclips.

On the timing of the increase. We be- lieve that there is no better time to imple- ment the increase in premium rates all paying members categories than now since, given that we have not had any in- crease in premium rates since 2009, we have in place more or less over the medium program from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in 2005. Over the last four years, we have launched seven screen two- nth packages which are increase in pre- mium contribution rates. The new pack- ages were available to all members, in- cluding OFWs and their legal and qualified dependents, at no additional cost to them, despite the inflation rates that the domestic economy had to deal with.

In our desire to fully achieve the objec- tives of Universal Health Care, we need to have adequate resources to make this. Right now, we are has counting efforts to deliver better benefits that will provide better fi- nancial protection to our members, i.e., in- patient and outpatient benefits, i.e., in- surgical each case of death to a primary care provider through which preventive and diagnostic services can be availed of.

On the alleged lack of consultations, the planned increase has been extensive- ly discussed and debated on in our Board of directors where the OFW sector is ade- quately represented. We shall continue organizing roundtable discussions with our key stakeholders regarding this in- crease to prevalent contributions to ad- dress whatever other issues they may have on the matter.

On the matter of fees. Based on our legal opinion, the Philhealth Circular consolidation to the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) are not considered fees since there are no payments being made by our mem- bers for materials that are of utilization- of services rendered or their membership cov- erage. These are payments for premium contributions that signify protection for their total health care.

On the need for baseline information concerning the OFWs, among days, we are ga- thering full-blast with our information dis- semination efforts regarding the increase in premium, particularly among OFW members who are set to leave the country by Jan. 1, 2012. Our total membership and in- formation drive during the phasing in pe- riod is to ensure that all those are ad- dressed prior to the full implementation of the new rates by July next year.

We welcome feedback from our OFW stakeholders, that is why we initiated a meeting on Dec. 20. Rest assured that we are open to most discussions on this matter, in the spirit of transparency and respectful engagement of our new poli- cy. Please send us your feedback at 810-6744 (National Health Line), "Bayad Pilipino, sagutin mo, Bayad Kalusugan, para sa Pilipino, Bayad Kalusugan, para sa lahat."

—CORDONIO B. PETILLA III,
President and CEO,
Philippine Health Insurance Corporation

Selecting SC members

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—DONALD O'HARA,
emailtodonald@hotmail.com

What to do with antique houses that have become public hazards

ROBERT A century ago, the house of the Pablo-Teleoret family on Tin- dalo street in Sampaloc, Manila, was home, true to its status in the province. Looking as it, I am remind- ed of the antique houses along Ja- cinto st. Binondo, which date back to the Spanish era. Another old home of the late Maria Fernanda Arnaiz-El Pimentel Avenue in Dasmariñas, most of those old houses, unlike that of the Pablo-Teleoret's, are almost dilapidated and have be- come eyesores. God forbid, they could easily catch fire if the local government were concerned to do so- mething about them. We only fear, using Vitaceae Avenue, as we both going to make, since he said we are related by the Bernardo family, an ancestral which are so fashionable. Even those deplorable exteriors, have would the many of Quiz quality to become a city?

In Dau- zone, a dilapidated house near Bridge No. 1 on the corner of T. Pinpin st. Binondo and Nicolas Bank Street poses a danger to passersby. I remember right, this house, built of strong materials and owned by a Fu- jian Binondo, was already standing there when I served in Dau- on Dec. 20, 1968. I have referred I speak be- cause my family and I resided in Bi- nondo Street, near Vitaceae Bank Street, from 1954 to 1960 when I bought for P700 a house of light materials, 1403 san Dau- Mabini St. Life is do what- man for Binondo.

In in hoped that Mayor Estrada will take action on this issue, after all, this is for the good of he constituents.

—COLONEL D. PETILLA III,
(Ritd) Sirvas,
Barangay Commonwealth,
Dist., Caloocan from 1600

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11 SM SUPERMALLS SWEEP
DON EMILIO ABELLO ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARDS

DOE Secretary Jose Rotzenbrun with recipients of the 2011 Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Awards from 11 Supermalls nationwide. Outstanding awards were given to SM malls in North EDSA, Bafiong, Cagayan de Oro, Sucat, Valenzuela and Rosales while SM City San Jose and Sucat were given awards. | SM City San Pedro, Cebu, Cebu, Davao and Iloilo received Special Awards, while with | SM City North EDSA, Bafiong, Cagayan de Oro, Sucat, Valenzuela and Rosales was awarded for their Outstanding Energy Management.

SM Prime Holdings recently swept the 2011 Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Awards when eleven of its supermalls garnered honors during ceremonies held recently at the Manila Fairway Center's All-Purpose Room.

The awards are the Department of Energy's tribute to Don Emilio Abello, who was known for to countless efforts to conserve energy and use fuel efficiency back in days when fuel was scarce and oil prices soared from US$2/barrel to US$100/barrel.

Don Emilio was in his late 60s and Chief Executive Officer of Meralco when the oil crisis occurred in 1973. He used his influence and resources to gather the Philippine Chamber of Industry, the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, the Rotary Clubs, and other trade and civic groups to join in the campaign to conserve energy.

The awards named in his honor were created to inspire other companies to exert their efforts and in sustaining economic growth and energy independence and SM received five Outstanding Awards, two Citations, and four Special Awards. Five Outstanding Energy Managers from the SM Malls were also honored during the event.

The Outstanding Award is given to a company that has improved its energy performance by 15% in its EEC from the previous year and who has had substantial energy efficiency and conservation programs. The five SM malls that received this award are SM City North EDSA at 5.0%, SM City Bafiong at 9.9%, SM City Cagayan de Oro at 6.9%, SM Supercenter Valenzuela at 10.8%, and SM City Rosales at 5.6%.

Managers from these malls were also given Outstanding Energy Manager Awards: Rowland Marcelo of SM City North EDSA, Teddy Marcelo of SM City Bafiong, Earl Leobrera of SM City Cagayan de Oro, Leopoldo Bartolo of SM Supercenter Valenzuela, and Alexander Rung of SM City Rosales.

Citations were given to SM City Santa Rosa (3.8%) and SM City Sucat (3.4%) for having improved their EEC by greater than 3% to lesser than 5% with substantial energy efficiency and conservation projects.

Special Awards were given to four SM Malls - SM City Santa Mesa (1.8%), SM City Cebu (2.7%), SM City Clark (3%), and SM City Consolacion - for improving their EEC by 1-3%.

The SM Supermalls' energy saving programs are spearheaded by the Environmental Committee of SM Cares, its corporate social responsibility arm.

DEL MONTE VOLUNTEERS BRING AID TO SENDONG SURVIVORS

Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Dec. 23 – Volunteers from the Manila Philippines University other groups who contributed to help aid and assist Cagayan and Typhoon Sendong, many of whom had their homes over, as well as their homes during one of the worst natural disasters in the city.

The volunteers are employees from the compa- ny's headquarters (Jimmy's Homepage Mugs, some 15 employees who were from Bukidnon areas of the city, some residents, and children of Barangay Mapulo, who are also on their school break. As news on the ground of handing a humanitarian mission to provide relief and comfort to families in various affect- ed areas in Cagayan de Oro.

Since the first day, it has faced two mobile teams of about 5-10 volunteers each conduct daily relief operation in barangays Consolacion, Macabalan, Carmen, Lapasan, Bonbon, Camaman-an, Bulua, Kauswagan, Agusan, Puerto, Balulang. Among the team's first priorities were some 100 of its employees whose houses were destroyed or carrying degrees by the floods. In addition to re- lief operations, they will also provide psychosocial debriefing sessions for those affected employees. Offices were also tasked to look out for the company employees and assess their needs and subsidy. Several of the affected employees were also given opportunities for employment in other Del Monte offices in the region.

Del Monte Philippines has also given some an short- age of $5,000 to help them with their recovery efforts. A total of 10,000 items per day are delivered to affected areas and they will continue for the next 30 days. To supplement the delivery, Del Monte Philippines has created four water refilling points outside its plant premises for public. A mobile medical team will also be deployed to the affected areas to provide free medical consultations, free immunization, and other services. The new evacuation centers, while homes go around homes and communities relief teams to provide per- sonal counseling, and attention and refer them to its medical team.

As Del Monte's Company Headquarters, teams had relief goods for delivery. Another team collects donations for the victims and their families. Donations for distribution. Volunteers from Del Monte's sign-up headquarters in Cebu, Philippines, Manila Fer- nando Corporation, Inc. (Philippines) Inc. Employees of the company. Given as some arrived with blankets, cash, and clothes. Even Dr. Cagayan de Oro orien- ting to help after the calamity. Some have not returning from their homes, making the houses ready for re- occupancy by Christmas Eve.

Del Monte Philippines Volunteers Operations Group Head Melissa Montemayor said: "We at Del Monte are one with the community in reaching for a start from this tragedy. The company as well as its volunteers are here to help."

This used to be the house of one of our employees in Barangay Carmen.

Not as many clean-up job.

Late strongman a cartoon villain and laughingstock

WASHINGTON — Late North Korean strongman Kim Jong-Il enjoyed an elaborate personality cult at home but he was also a favorite of Western popular media, which found him to be a time-tested source of laughs.

From Hollywood movies to websites, satirists relished skewering a leader whose shrill missives to the world, intolerance for any dissent and bonkers hairstyle made him — at times broadly — cartoon villain.

Kim, who is to receive a massive funeral send-off on Wednesday, was upended on Fox's MADtv as a talk show host who says about his pursuit of nuclear weapons and ghastly domestic pitfalls said members who do not follow his every wish.

Even more incongruously, a website dubbed "Kim Jong-Il Dropping On Base" depicts the usually humorless dictator as a nightclub DJ, ending the spotlight to revelers as he downs Hennessy cognac.

Kim's death has immediate consequences for nine US shows, NBC's "30 Rock," reboot a fiction of him kidnapped a character. Sony have been taking an untold media hour the show will adapt.

'Tragic comedy'

Margaret Cho, the Korean-American actress who has played Kim on "30 Rock," wrote on her blog that while the role was obviously unsettling, she had a sense of tragedy when she donned his trademark pompadour.

"My heart broke for a country cut off from the rest of the world, whose only representative is a crazed megalomaniac who fancies himself a pop-star," Cho wrote. "I can only imagine the most incredible gold, he also dresses Kim and a half man-half dude—also half-ass—as well as being a full-time dictator," she said.

Perhaps the best-known satire of Kim Jong-Il was in the 2004 movie "Team America: World Police," a biting take on US foreign policy by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, creators of the popular animated series "South Park."

Kim, in marionette form, broods 'till revenge is unspoken from little is thanks, plans to carry out bombings across the world and organizes a "peace movement" led by actor Alec Baldwin.

Polar opposite

At one point, Kim wanders solitarily around his palace and sings a Broadway-style love ballad, "I'm So Lonely." Its version, "I'm the smartest, smart person, most physically fit, and handsome world leader in existence."

The mockery stands in polar opposite to North Korean official media, which faithfully reported the strongman's supposed exploits such as firing 11 holes in one in his first try at golf.

The state media coverage in itself has garnered a following overseas. One blog entitled "Kim Jong-Il looking at things" collects pictures of the leader's inspections of everything from toilet paper to fruit as he toured the country.

Jono Becks, who set up the blog last year following Kim's supposedly looking at things seen his cheeks, said that the site received four million page-views in the three days after Kim's death was announced.

Becks, who is an illustrator for the advertising firm Hat in Lisbon, Portugal, said he laughed out loud when he first stumbled upon the pictures of Kim but was surprised than his blog has generated so much interest.

"The tour, hat and glasses, of course, but his general vibe is the most hilarious part about it. Sometimes he doesn't seem to understand what the hell he's looking at," Becks said.

No laughing matter

Despite the wide mockery of him, not all are having a laugh. The United States and its allies have been careful in official comments on Kim's death, with South Korea warning North forces of provocations by any desperate act.

Human rights groups have been highlighting the seriousness of problems in North Korea, saying that Kim is responsible for thousands if not millions of deaths through starvation, executions, brutal labor and imprisonment.

And some Asian Americans are uneasy about the media depictions. The humor in "Team America" plays on Kim's small stature and some Asians' difficulty distinguishing between Chinese, Japanese and Koreans.

Frank H. Wu, chancellor and dean of the University of California Hastings College of the Law and author of "Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White," said that while culturally Asian Americans empathize with Kim, the commentary on sensitive about racial stereotyping.

"When individual Asian foreigners are criticized, as they should be, there is the risk of a group image that adversely affects Asian Americans," he said.

Asians other are deported with sensitivity and sensitivity following a leader Australians' Asian Americans are accused of the same thing when they participate in politics here, being considered the end may be incapable of being president thought." AFP

Tears, snow mingle at Kim's funeral

From page A1

THEY TY grab taken from North Korean TV on Wednesday shows a portrait of the late leader Kim Jong-Il on a car during his funeral ceremony in Pyongyang. North Korean state television began broadcasting the funeral of late leader Kim Jong-Il with footage of tens of thousands of troops turning their heads in the snow outside a mourning ballroom.

... on all crying tears of blood."

Personality cult

The scenes of grief provide a clue at how effective North Korea has been in building a personality cult around Kim Jong-Il even though people have suffered greatly from food shortages and the United Nations and others cite a lack of human rights.

The North's neighbors and the United States are also praising Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Kim, who led the nation with an iron fist following his father Kim Il-sung's death in 1994, died of a heart attack on Dec. 17 at age 69, according to state media.

Kim Jong-Il's coffin was wrapped in a red flag. A limousine carrying a huge portrait of a smiling Kim led the procession. Outside observers will be watching Wednesday's footage closely for clues on the leadership of Kim Jong-un's inner circle.

Walking behind Kim was Jang Song-thaek, Kim Jong-Il's brother-in-law and a vice chair of the powerful National Defense Commission who is expected to play a essential role in helping Kim Jong-un take power.

Also executing the limousine were military chief Ri Yong-ho and People's Armed Forces Minister Kim Yong-chun. Their presence indicates they will be important players as the younger Kim consolidates his leadership. Top Workers' Party cell chair Choe Thae-bok and Kim Yi-sam and senior military official Kim Jong-gak also were prominent positions, according to South's Unification Ministry.

Core power

"It shows they still be core powers in North Korea," said Yoo Ho-yeol, a professor at Korea University in South Korea. "For the leadership, Jang Song-thaek and Ri Yong-ho will be key to Kim Jong-un's leadership."

The military presence at the funeral also suggests Kim will uphold his father's "songun" or military-first policy, Ho said.

After the funeral, the young Kim is expected to cement his power by formally assuming command of the 1.2 million-strong military, and forswearing powerful secretary of the Workers' Party and chair of the party's Central Military Commission, Ho said.

Kim Jong-Il's two other sons, Kim Jong-nam and Kim Jong-chol, have not been spotted.

Kim Jong-un made his public debut just last year with a promotion to four-star general and an appointment as vice chair of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party.

Earlier, state television re-played images of missiles being fired and the April 2009 long-range rocket launch that earned South Korea strengthened UN sanctions. The United States, South Korea and other nations refused a year for a missile designed to strike the US. North's forces used the rocket sent a communications satellite into space.

The North has conducted two nuclear tests and Larry Niksch, who has tracked North Korea for the nonpartisan US Congressional Research Service, believes it could take as little as one to two years to have a working atomic missile once it produced enough highly enriched uranium for the warhead's core fuel.

Kim Jong-Il's death at the age of 69 leaves behind two sons and a North Korean nation, as defectors launched leaflets over the border calling for an uprising.

A group of about 120 activists attempted to break into the offices of South Korean self-ruling activist group Fighters for Freedom, the scuffles with police, the South's Yonhap news agency said. One protester was reported to have gone to hospital with a broken leg.

Reports from AFP/Reuters

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Earlier, state television re-

Teen ma quits cancer treatment to save baby

From page A1

the newborn tightly, kissing the top of his head. Jenn, at 1.5-inches tall, weighed only 69 kilograms, the full term of her pregnancy.

A day after the blue, 9 birth, Phillips learned that her daughter's decision to forgo treatment for tumors on her brain and spine or she could carry the baby to term have left her in tears.

The cancer had marked ten small lesions. Nothing could be done.

It was only 11 days past the birth—half spent in the hospital and the other half at home—before Jenn stopped moving.

Even so, her family and friends insist her legacy is not one centered in tragedy, but rather in sacrifice.

This month, her family gathered at their home in Prineville, where a large tree in the living room was adorned with ornaments painted out just for Jenn, including one in bright blue green, her favorite color. She had passed away in a bedroom down the hall.

Providing Jenn's relatives laugh and a rebellious streak, her mother held the baby close, nuzzling his head, and said, "I want him to know everything about her, and what she did."

Migraines at 14

The migraines started last year, when Jenn was a 14-year-old high school sophomore. An MRI scan found a small mass measuring about two centimeters wide inside the right side of her brain.

She was sent to a hospital in Salt Lake City, and another scan showed the mass was bigger than previously thought.

Jenn had a biopsy on Oct. 11, 2010, and was diagnosed with stage three astrocytoma, a type of brain cancer. With three tumors on her brain and three on her spine, Jenn was told her case was rare because the cancer had spread from her brain to another part of her body with no symptoms.

Her parents, who are divorced, were brought into a room at the hospital as doctors discussed her chances of survival.

"Jenny just flat out asked them if she was going to die," said her father, Mike Lake, 43, a truck driver.

10% chance

The answer wasn't good. With treatment, the teen was told she had a 50-percent chance to make it two years. "She didn't break down and cry or anything," Lake said. But her mom recalled Jenn did have a look of disbelief.

"When they told her that she might not be able to have kids, she got upset," said Phillips, 39.

Jenn started aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatments, which also painting various on Sea Bay city video "Jenn's Journey" where she hoped to share her story. She managed to upload only three videos as her treatments left her tired and weak.

On her second video, Jenn appeared bald.

"Last night, like, I was just lying in bed and I was thinking about everything that was going on and it just like, it just hit me, like everything, and I don't know, it made me cry," Jenn says on her videos.

Tumors shrink

Her team is shown burying her face in her hands, then collapsing into tears.

Jenn's previous "I feel like this is holding me back from so much ..."

By March of this year, the tumors had started to shrink, the family said.

In a picture taken at her prom in early May, Jenn is wearing a dark blue strapless dress. There's a silver bread-band in her hair, which is less than an inch long. Christofferson may rock her shoulder-length blond tresses.

Her boyfriend, Nathan Williams, is standing her from behind.

Young dreams

Jenn started dating Nathan a couple of weeks before she received her diagnosis. Their adolescent relationship weathered the very adult test posed by cancer, the treatments that left her barely able to walk from her living room to her bedroom, and the passing of time.

They were hopeful and dreamed of someday opening a restaurant or a gallery. Jenn had been working at an apparel store in a mini-shop. But in May, her visits to the shop grew less frequent.

She had been throwing up a lot until had sharp stomach pains. She went to the emergency room early one morning with her boyfriend and when she returned home, her family members woke up to the sound of crying.

She had learned she was pregnant. An ultrasound would show the fetus was 18 weeks old.

Journey for 2

Jenn's journey was no longer her own.

Jenn had always wanted to be a mom. She had already determined to keep the baby when she went to see her oncologist, Dr. David Kline.

"He told to that if she's pregnant, she won't continue the treatments," Phillips said. "So she would rather have to remember the pregnancy and continue the treatments, or stop the treatments, knowing that it could continue to grow again."

Kline said in cases in which a cancer patient is pregnant, oncologists will consider both the risks and benefits of terminating with treatment, such as chemotherapy.

"There are times having pregnancy in some of cancers, breast cancer being the classic example, where the benefits of terminating the pregnancy outweigh the risks to mother and baby," Kline said. "There are other times where the risk outweighs the benefits."

There was no discussion about whether Jenn's mental state was compromised by her pregnancy, she had a strong chance of carrying the baby and then initiating its treatment after he was born.

No regrets

Jenni and Nathan named the baby Chad Michael, after their dads.

Jenni didn't show regret for her decision, nor in the final weeks of her pregnancy as she grew weaker, and nor when she started to lose her vision as the cancer took its course.

Jenni's last words were about her son as he was placed beside her a final time, her father said. As she felt her daughter she said: "I can feel of me him."

Jenni's YouTube videos: http://www.youtube.com/jennsjourney AP

THE DAILY GOSPEL

DECEMBER 29 (Thursday)
Feather / Week 1
Old Days: Octave of Christmas or Thomas Becket
Ex 6:6-7, 2a, 2b-3, 20-9
Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice!
1 Jn 2:3-11

Lk Reading
Beloved, how can we know that we know him? If we fulfillthe commandments. If you say, "I know him," but do not fulfill his commands, you are a liar and the truth is not in you, but if anyone obeys his word, God's love is made complete in you. This is how we know that we are in him: he who claims to live in him must live as he lived. My dear friends, I am not writing you a new commandment, but reminding you of an old one, one you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word you have heard. And yet I am writing you a new commandment, a truth that is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the real light is already shining. Whoever claims to be in the light but hates a brother, you are still in darkness. If you love your brothers and sisters, you remain in the light and nothing in you will make you fall.

Gospel: Lk 2:22-35

When the day came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God. And they offered a sacrifice as ordered by the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now there lived in Jerusalem at this time a man named Simeon. He was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. He looked forward to the time when the Lord would comfort Israel, and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. So he came into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying,

"Now, O Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace, for you have fulfilled your word and I can go to my grave with my salvation, which you display for all the people to see.

Now is the light you will reveal to the nations and the glory of your people Israel."

His father and mother wondered at what was said about the child. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother of the child, "Here he is for the rise or fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many may be brought to light."

Reflection:
Simeon had been patiently and prayerfully waiting for the Messiah all his life. He is a good example of a contemplative man. He was not waiting anxiously like those waiting for Easter but with some certainty that the Savior will come. So we can just imagine his joy on the sight of the baby Jesus. His comfort was in knowing that God's will was being done. He was ready in the face of final grief. May we be able to have a glimpse of that experience in moment of reading our salvation face to face.

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Delos Reyes

LEBRON James dunks the ball on a breakaway against the Boston Celtics. The Miami Heat star praised rookie teammate Marvin Cole, saying "If it was football, he'd get the game ball." AFP

'Cole-blooded' rookie turns up the Heat in Miami

LOS ANGELES guard Steve Blake eludes two Jazz defenders as the Lakers avoid falling over a 0-3 hole. AP

MIAMI—It took a rookie with ice in his veins to rescue the Miami Heat.

Marvin Cole buried redlit-hot clutch as the Heat held off the Boston Celtics, 115-107, Tuesday to maintain their impressive start to the National Basketball Association season and hand their fabled opponents their second consecutive loss.

The Heat, beaten by Dallas in last year's NBA finals, dominated for much of the game and led by 13 points at halftime, but the Celtics stormed some semblance into the fourth quarter and twice reduced the deficit to three to take the final three minutes.

Cole, a surprise draft pick out of Cleveland State, showed great confidence and steel in some 383 points, 14 of them in the fourth quarter and made free throws, proving clutch leaders in the nerve-frayed moments.

For years, the "Big Three" of LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh were overshadowed as fans left the arena chattering about the exciting potential of Cole.

COLE AP

"If it was football, he'd get the game ball," James said of his fellow Ohio native, who came up with a crucial three-pointer to answer a free-point lead just as Boston was scoring an unlikely comeback.

"That kid's one of those diamonds in the rough, one of those kids who are very mature and we know we need to get him," said Wade, who ended up with 24 points and eight assists. "The biggest thing was to be able to take those shots and not be afraid of the moment, he's the kind of player who thinks that is what he should be doing.

"We are a guy who isn't afraid to put the work in and who, from day one, has come in and been able to run the show and be able to tell guys like me and LeBron to get out of the way you have to support that.

"He didn't hesitate, he made the big plays down the stretch and I haven't been on a side with a young guy doing that, so many times, for a long time. Hats off to him," he quipped.

Cole clearly has the ability to take challenges in his stride and he adroitly avoided a potential media pitfall when asked about whether there was now a "Big Four" to Miami.

"Don't get carried away, I'm still learning. It was a big game for me but those guys have proven over and over again for years in this league that they are clutch performers and I am still learning, I'm still getting better," Cole told reporters.

Miami is 2-0-0 in the new, reclaimed, season after also winning their opener at Orlando Dec. 25.

In Newark, New Jersey, the Atlanta Hawks opened a double-digit lead early and cruised to a 106-73 win of the Nets, who were playing their last home opener as the state.

Marvin Williams had 19 points and nine rebounds while Jeff Teague added 13 points for the Hawks, who dominated the Nets in a game in which the second was hosting the Brooklyn-bound team by halftime.

In Milwaukee, rookie Jon Leuer recovered a three-point play with 1.57 left, helping the Bucks hold off the Minnesota Timberwolves, 98-95, in their home opener.

In Los Angeles, the Lakers avoided just the fourth 0-3 start in franchise history by crushing the Utah Jazz, 98-71.

Kobe Bryant scored 28 points and Steve Blake added 22 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who had much more life than the Jazz despite playing their third game in three nights as opener the season.

In Portland, Gerald Wallace had 23 points, eight rebounds and five assists, as the Trail Blazers zipped the Sacramento Kings, 101-79. Reuters, AP

Garcia: NSAs lack experts for grassroots program

By Jane Manaog

SOME national sports associations are in no position to conduct a grassroots program that will tap future stars in the countryside due to lack of qualified personnel in some outside of key cities and the National Capital Region.

The Philippine Sports Commission released this overall assessment of the 2011 Batang Pinoy Games, which featured 33 disciplines mostly Olympic sports.

PSC chair Richie Garcia declined to divulge the NSAs but expressed disappointment on their inability to establish a grassroots program reaching the countryside due to a lack of manpower.

"We noticed that there are some NSAs which don't have any program in the provinces at all. They cannot identify and develop talents because they simply don't have (enough) qualified people in the field," said Garcia.

The Batang Pinoy held its national finals in Naga City two weeks ago after gathering the gold and silver medalists from the five regional qualifying legs in Zamboanga (Mindanao), Dumaguete (Visayas), Baguio (Northern Central Luzon), Marikina City (NCR) and Sta. Cruz, Laguna (Southern Luzon).

The events contested by youngsters 15 years old and below were track and field, swimming, archery, arnis, badminton, basketball, boxing, chess, gymnastics, judo, table tennis, taekwondo, wrestling and weightlifting.

"Finding talents from different schools in Metro Manila is not enough. The NSAs have to search for future stars in the countryside," said Garcia.

Aside from swimming athletes and swimming, Garcia said boxing and taekwondo drew the largest turnout from 99 local government units during the finals and the qualifying legs.

"Our grassroots programs will be growing bigger and bigger every year. It's a long-term plan and more funds will be allocated to these programs," said Garcia, referring to the Batang Pinoy and Philippine National Games.

The PSC has been pushing for a younger wave of athletes to keep the stream of available talents flowing.

Led by an aging group of athletes, the country finished a record low ninth overall in the Southeast Asian Games last November with a gold, silver-bronze haul of 36-56-77, the worst output since it joined the biennial meet in 1977.

NBA Premium ends 2011 with a bang

AFTER airing all of the five Christmas Day games on the world's best basketball league, NBA Premium TV will keep the ball rolling with a series of tremendous games for the remainder of 2011.

Among the fixtures to look out for are today's reportedly high-scoring shootout between the New York Knicks and the Golden State Warriors at 11:00 a.m.

The Boston Celtics, starting from a 0-2 start, face the New Orleans Hornets at 9 p.m. (via satellite).

A rematch of last year's Western Conference finals between the Oklahoma City Thunder and the Dallas Mavericks will air live at 9 a.m. on Dec. 31 followed by a battle between the New York Knicks and the Los Angeles Lakers at 11:00 a.m.

Before 2011 says goodbye, NBA Premium TV will air two more games on the Miami Heat take on the Minnesota Timberwolves at 9 a.m. and the Chicago Bulls battle hosts with the LA Clippers at 11:30 a.m.

For more details about NBA Premium TV log on to www.nbapremium.com.ph. NBA Premium TV is available on GlobeCable (ID: ch 48, 186 CH 175), Cignal Digital TV (ch. 161), and Global Destop Sun (Sigbox) or contact your local cable provider.

SPORT STACKING: Team Philippines emerged overall champion in the 2011 Asian Sport Stacking Open Championships held in Singapore last month. The players, supported by Ban Kee Trading Inc., Accel, through its president Willie Ong, and Tan Miguel Corp., through basketball operations chief Robert Non (on floor, left), Nonoy Miguel Ramos, Juan Manuel Ramos, Dameron Pangalinan, Yilan Tinatao, Jerome Nilmos, Kiarra Lucero, Jan Dominic Ventanera and Jose Rafael Ilao Agraviador. Also with the team, which won a total of 40 trophies and medals in the seven nation competition, is Reverend Caballo.

Tottenham threat alive

LONDON—Tottenham established itself as the likeliest challenger to the dominance of the Manchester clubs in the Premier League this season, beating Norwich 2-0 on Thursday to tighten its grip on third place.

A sharp second-half double by winger Gareth Bale lifted Spurs to within seven points of City and United, with the London club still holding a game in hand—at home to Everton next month.

With fifth-place Arsenal drawing 1-1 at home to Aleksandr Hleb, Spurs are on course to finish ahead of the Gunners for the first time since 1995.

Tottenham, which has been tipped by many to break the stranglehold of the Manchester clubs and Liverpool on the title, has been playing like champions in recent weeks, winning seven of its last eight games.

Bale's goal, a powerful shot from the edge of the box, was his 10th of the season and came after Norwich goalkeeper John Ruddy had saved from Jermain Defoe.

Defoe, who has been in fine form since returning from a hamstring injury, turned in the rebound to double Spurs' lead in the 70th minute.

Norwich, which has been in the relegation zone for most of the season, had a goal disallowed for offside in the first half and had Ruddy to thank for a string of saves in the second.

Spurs

Lady Archer triumvirate top bets for volley plums

By Cedrolf P. Rapus

TWELVE players at the forefront of defending champion La Salle's unbeaten start to the UAAP Season 74 women's volleyball tournament also figure prominently in the race for individual awards.

La Salle ace Abigail Maraño, Michelle Gumabao and Cha Cruz are leading key statistics, just before the league veers into a half-day break.

Underscoring their worth, the Lady Archers pace the tournament with a 6-0 record, followed by Ateneo at 5-1, Adamson and University of Santo Tomas at 4-2, Far Eastern U at 3-3, National U and University of the East at 1-4 and University of the Philippines at 0-6.

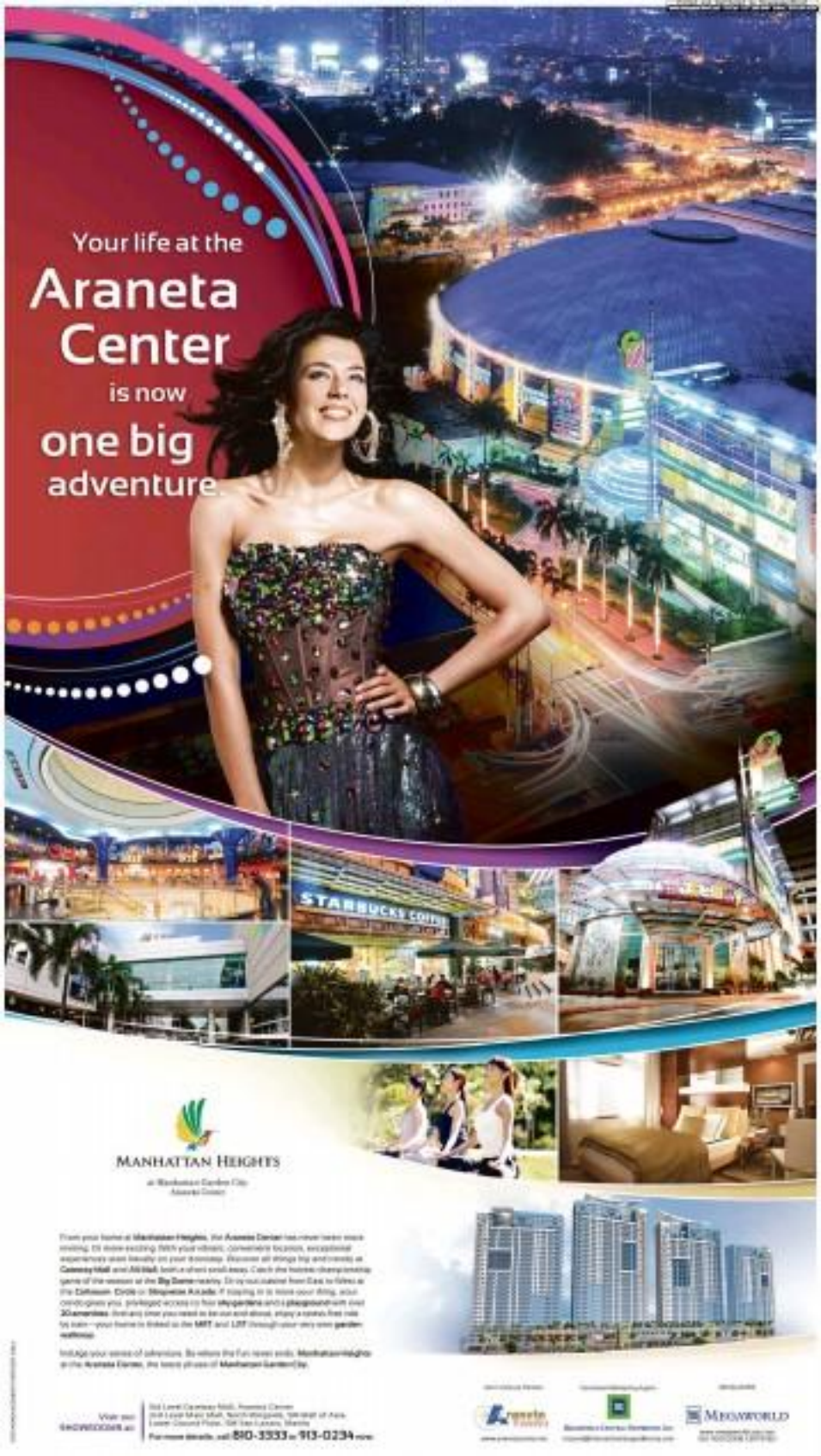
The third four-time national playmaker is undoubtedly Maraño, who ranks fifth in scoring (2.83 points per set), second in attacking (.303 percentage) and third in digging (2.17 per set).

Gumabao is fourth in scoring (2.67), fifth in attacking (.294) and second in digging (2.33), while Cruz is sixth in scoring (2.50), seventh in attacking (.286) and fifth in digging (2.17).

Maraño, Gumabao and Cruz are also the top three players in total points (16.83, 16 and 15, respectively), total attacks (37, 36 and 35) and total digs (14, 13 and 13).

Maraño is also second in total blocks (1.33) and total aces (1.17), while Gumabao is third in total blocks (1.17) and fifth in total aces (1).

Cruz is also second in total aces (1.17) and fifth in total blocks (1



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POLICE WARNING FOR INTERNET BUYERS

Beware of stolen cars sold online

By DJ Yap

BE VERY careful when buying or selling cars, or anything for that matter, on the Internet.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police warned the public on Tuesday about a syndicate selling stolen vehicles through a popular classified ads website.

The CIDG said it arrested a member of the syndicate in an entrapment operation in the parking lot of Marsman Tower on Timog Avenue, Quezon City. The syndicate is allegedly operated by a Chinese-Filipino.

Michael S. Udasco, a 26-year-old resident of Angono, Rizal, was caught as he delivered a black Honda 3 that was believed to have been stolen, CIDG Director Samuel Pagdilao Jr. said in a statement.

The police operation was based on a complaint filed by Roberto Jose Magpantay Shelloe, 32, a businessman from Pasig City who reported to the CIDG the theft of her brown Mazda 3 on Dec. 18 allegedly by Richard Co Go.

Shelloe said she met Co in November after she posted an online ad to sell her car.

Co, she said, called her up and they agreed to meet so he could test drive the vehicle. But when they stopped at a fast food restaurant in Taguig City, he drove off with her car, the complainant said.

Two days after the incident, Shelloe and CIDG investigators spotted through sulit.com.ph, an online buy-and-sell site, that Co would try to sell the Mazda 3.

Instead, they came across an ad for a black Mazda 3 being sold by Eric Co whose contact number was the same as Co's (where he called Shelloe, the CIDG said).

Co was also selling several spare vehicles on the buy-and-sell site.

Posing as buyers, CIDG agents made a deal with Co who agreed to meet them at Nicholas Tirona Subdivision in Bacoor, Cavite. Instead of Co, however, Udasco showed up, leading to his arrest and the recovery of the black Mazda.

Udasco, who said Co was his "boss," showed investigators documents for the car but these turned out to be spurious upon verification, the CIDG said.

Udasco said the black Mazda was sold to Co by Cai Rong Ji of Pasay City but it turned out the owner was Bermoso. The CIDG learned the black Mazda 3 was registered to another businessman in Metro Manila.

Charges of car theft, falsification of documents and robbery-extortion were filed against Udasco while the CIDG is still working to arrest the leader of the group.

YEAR OF THE DRAGON
A celebrant in a shop in Binondo, Manila, draws one of several dragon-shaped lucky charms being sold in the establishment. According to the Chinese zodiac, 2012 is the year of the Water Dragon. AFP PHOTO

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Firemen's prompt response saves family of five

THICK smoke roasts firefighters as they prepare to enter a building on Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City, where a fire broke out in a laboratory clinic on the second floor. The fire, which was put out an hour later, did not cause any injuries or deaths although patients in a hospital beside the building had to be moved out because of the smoke.

By Mike Cahiga

RESPONDING firefighters arrived just in the nick of time to save a family of five who were trapped inside a burning building beside Mandaluyong Medical Center before dawn yesterday.

"If we [had] arrived a few minutes later, all of them would have died of suffocation," assistant fire inspector SPO1 Victorio Tabby said in a phone interview.

Injured from certain death were Eugeni Tabora, 34; his wife Virginia, 38; and their three children identified as Ishiel, 10; Emmanuel, 6; and Verna, 3.

The family lives in Balesin but have been temporarily staying at Jubitron Laboratory Clinic which is located on the second floor of a five-story establishment beside Mandaluyong Medical Center on Boni Avenue, Barangay Plainview.

At 1:40 a.m. yesterday, a fire, broke out in the clinic which is owned by Jubitron's owner, identified by the smoke, the family rushed out, only to realize that they were trapped because the gate which served as the only way in and out of the building had been padlocked. The key, on the other hand, was inside the burning floor.

"The family shouted for help as the smoke began to reach them.

"Good thing we arrived within two minutes because the firestation was just a few meters away. Had we gotten there later, we would have stumbled upon a tragedy," Tabby said.

Firefighters opened the gate by force, rescued the family and took them to the hospital.

The blaze which reached the third alarm was put out at 2:55 a.m. Bid which firefighters were battling the flames, patients at Mandaluyong Medical Center had to be evacuated after their black smoke engulfed the facility.

Tabby said Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos who has testify was awakened by the commotion and immediately rushed to the scene.

Hospital operations, however, resumed as normal after members of the Bureau of Fire Protection declared the blaze under control.

Probers are still trying to determine what caused the fire although they suspect that it was probably due to faulty electrical wiring as the building was old and dilapidated.

Damage to property was placed at around P500,000.

Student shot dead; body found on street in QC

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A 28 YEAR-OLD student was shot and killed in front of an eatery in Quezon City on Tuesday night, according to a police report.

PO3 Joselito Caguioa of the homicide section of the Quezon City Police District identified the victim as Shelber Jacinto, a resident of Brixonia Street in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City.

Caguioa said the victim was shot repeatedly at close range by a still unidentified man while he was buying food from a nearby eatery at 11:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

According to the police investigator, the victim was rushed to East Avenue Medical Center where he was declared dead on arrival by attending doctors.

Fellow investigators have yet to determine the motive for the killing.

Meanwhile, a man with a bash wound in the neck was found inside a sack that had been placed inside a garbage bag.

A tricycle driver discovered the body at the corner of Misita Claro and Mapa Streets in Barangay San Isidro Labrador yesterday morning.

The victim was described as 5'-0" tall, of slim build and with fair skin. He was dressed in a gray pair of shorts and t-shirt when found.

Traffic rerouting in place for Makati New Year street party

By Mike Morales

THE MAKATI City government has implemented a traffic rerouting scheme that will begin Thursday midnight, leading to its much-awaited New Year's Eve countdown and street party along Ayala Avenue on Saturday.

Mayor Jejomar Erwin Binay asked private and public motorists to stay away from the activity area, and instead use alternative routes designated by the city's public safety department.

"Let us welcome the New Year safely together with our family, thankful for all the blessings we receive, and pray for peace, safety and prosperity for the entire country," Binay said in a statement.

Makati residents, together with invited guests and visitors, are expected to party at the country's financial capital and watch the fireworks display to usher in the New Year.

The following roads closed to traffic until noon of Jan. 1 are: The portion of Ayala Avenue from Paseo de Roxas to South Drive and from Paseo de Roxas to Paseo de Roxas and both lanes of Makati Avenue from Paseo de Roxas to Dela Rosa Street.

No buses shall be allowed to enter through Ayala Avenue from Edsa and Gil Puyat Avenue. Instead, the buses are advised to utilize Gil Puyat Avenue from Edsa toward their destination, and vice versa.

Public utility vehicles (PUVs) heading to Ayala Avenue from J.P. Rizal Street can turn right to Makati Avenue, then take them de Roxas to Ayala Avenue.

PUVs coming from Washington Street can take Gil Puyat Avenue, Ayala, then turn right to Salcedo Street and take the to their destination.

The early closure of the road will give organizers time to set up final booths along Ayala Avenue and prepare for other activities as well.

Musical performances from some of the country's top bands, as well as magical acts, will take center stage during the city's traditional New Year's Countdown festivities, which were revived this year after a two-year hiatus.

The city government also rented a pyro-musical display as the highlight of the night.

In Las Piñas City, on the other hand, Mayor Vergel Aguilar has discouraged residents from using firecrackers and banning cars to welcome the New Year.

In a statement, the official asked the police to monitor and arrest persons who violate laws on dangerous firecrackers and pyrotechnics in the hopes of preventing the number of casualties in the revelry leading to the New Year.

Citing health experts, Aguilar said the smoke from firecrackers takes a toll on one's lungs particularly on those suffering from asthma, pneumonia and other respiratory ailments. Apart from those, it could also cause eye irritation, rhinitis, and headaches, among other illnesses, he added.

HAND SELL
A fruit vendor offers passersby free samples of the grapes she sells in her stall.

DID YOU KNOW

ACCORDING to data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the lowest temperature for Metro Manila was recorded at 14.5 degrees Celsius in January 1914 at the Port Area in Manila. The coldest temperature for this year in Manila was recorded at 18.5 degrees Celsius, also in January.

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- Aware of a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
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- Is there an everyday rule model in your neighborhood?
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INQUIRER

'Firecrackers bad for your pets, too'

By Jayson T. Gamil

HERE'S another reason for not using firecrackers to celebrate the start of the New Year—they pose a risk not only to your health but your pet's as well.

Environmental group Eco Waste Coalition issued this reminder yesterday as its members gathered in front of Manila Zoo to dramatize their opposition to the use of fireworks in welcoming the New Year.

Wearing cardboard hats in the shape of animals, the Mallibulong Lolahin sa Bagay-pasyalong sa Sitong sa Kalusa (Malolos) acted out how dogs and cats panic and hide when they hear the painfully loud noises caused by fireworks displays.

"One New Year's revelry is like a terrifying battlefield for cats, dogs and other animals whose ears are far more sensitive than humans. It's like being subjected to ear-splitting gunfire, bomb and mortar for them," said Allison Larrera, the group's New Year/Pet Safe campaigner.

EcoWaste Coalition, quoting veterinarians, said firecracker explosions may cause "sensory trauma" for animals whose method of hearing is at least 10 times more delicate than that of humans.

The ensuing panic also upsets their stomachs or make them too anxious to even eat.

"Our pets deserve a safe pet-proofed New Year's celebration for them and not one to outsmart with fireworks and loud noises caused by fireworks," said the group pointed out in a press statement.

The group added that if firecrackers and fireworks can't be shunned, people should prepare "soothing sounds" for their pets' ears to hide from sonic furies and noises.

On Monday, EcoWaste Coalition had also held a demonstration at the Our Lady of Remedies Parish Church in Malate, with children using alternative noisemakers to welcome the New Year.

Rev. Fr. John Leydon, the parish priest, noted that "With a little creativity, we can have a joyful celebration with our family and our neighbors and certainly the toxic fumes and waste and loud cries from children wounded in firecracker explosions."

Trader robbed, killed in Manila

By Jayson T. Gamil

MANILA policemen are now looking for a cousin of San Andres Bukid who is suspected to have robbed and shot dead a friend on Tuesday evening.

John Abrante, 35, was later seen with a handgun climbing up the rooftops in the neighborhood to escape, minutes after he allegedly shot Crisostomo Rosano, 40, a businessman.

At around 9 p.m., bystanders near Barangay 766, Zone 84, heard multiple gunshot sounds and found Rosano slumped and bloodied on his motorcycle on Dapo Street.

Attempts to save his life by rushing him to the hospital proved futile, said case investigator Police Officer 3 Alexis Layugan of the Manila Police District Homicide section.

A resident of Dapo Street, Carolina Sayson, told police that moments after the shooting, she spotted Abrante running up to the third floor of their building with a gun.

The suspect then jumped on the roofs of neighboring houses to escape.

Rosano's wife, Juliza, told police that her husband was carrying an estimated P15,000 in cash.

There was no trace of the money when police searched the crime scene.

Residents reported that Rosano was a "former friend" of Rosano.

Police were able recover four empty shells of a .45 caliber gun at the area.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Chanco

PLAYFUL CHIMP Johnny Weissmuller (right) as Tarzan, Maureen O'Sullivan as Jane, and Cheetah the chimpanzee are shown in a scene from the 1932 movie 'Tarzan the Ape Man.' AFP

Iran threatens to stop shipments of Gulf oil

TEHRAN—Iran threatened on Tuesday to stop the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz if foreign sanctions were imposed on its crude exports over its nuclear ambitions, a move that could trigger military conflict with economies dependent on Gulf oil.

Western sanctions with Iran have increased since a Nov. 8 report by the UN nuclear watchdog saying Tehran appears to have worked on designing an atomic bomb and may still be pursuing research to that end. Iran strongly denies this and says it is developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Iran has deliberately expanded nuclear activity despite four rounds of UN sanctions meant to curb it. In 2006 over its refusal to suspend sensitive uranium enrichment and open up to UN nuclear inspectors and investigators.

Many diplomats and analysts believe only sanctions targeting Iran's lifeblood oil sector might be painful enough to make it change course, but Russia and China—big trade partners of Tehran—have blocked such a move at the United Nations.

Iran's warning on Tuesday came three weeks after EU foreign ministers decided to tighten sanctions over the UN watchdog report and laid out plans for a possible embargo of oil from the world's No. 3 crude exporter.

"If they (the West) impose sanctions on Iran's oil exports, then even one drop of oil cannot flow from the Strait of Hormuz," the official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi as saying.

The US State Department said it saw "no element of threats" in the threat but underscored that the United States would support the free flow of oil.

"It's another attempt to distract attention away from the real issue, which is their continued non-compliance with their international nuclear obligations," spokesperson Mark Toner said. Reuters

Cheetah of 'Tarzan' films dies

WASHINGTON—Cheetah, the chimpanzee that starred in the "Tarzan" films of the 1930s, has passed away at the age of 80, according to the Florida sanctuary where he had lived for more than 30 years.

"It is with great sadness that the community has lost a dear friend and family member on Dec. 26, 2011," the Sanctuary Primate Sanctuary in Palm Harbor, Florida announced on its website.

Cheetah had performed in "Tarzan the Ape Man" (1932) and "Tarzan and His Mate" (1934), classic films about a man raised in the jungle starring Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan.

The chimpanzee—who arrived at the sanctuary in 1966—loved finger painting and watching television, and was soothed by Christian music, the sanctuary's statement said. server Debbie Cobb told the Tampa Tribune.

"He could roll if I was having a good day or a bad day. He was always trying to get me to laugh if he thought I was having a bad day. He was very, very sweet to humans and dogs," Cobb was quoted as saying.

Boo Frost, a veterinary veterinarian, told the Tribune that Cheetah stood out because he could walk upright with a straight back like a human, and that he was distinguished by other talents.

"Most he didn't like somebody or something that was going on, he would pick up some poop and throw it at them. He could get you at 30 feet with just in between," Frost said. AFP

Mass protests in Syria as Arab League monitors arrive

HOMS—Tens of thousands of defiant Syrians, protesters have thronged the streets of Homs, calling for the resignation of President Bashar Assad shortly after his army pulled its tanks back and allowed Arab League monitors in for the first time in the city at the heart of the anti-government uprising.

The pullback on Tuesday was the first sign the regime was complying with the League's plan to end the 9-month-old crackdown on mostly unarmed and peaceful protesters.

But the massive video released by activists showed forces firing on protesters even while the monitors were inside the city. One of the observers walked with an elderly man who pulled with his cane to a fresh pool of blood on the street that he said had been shed by his son, killed a day earlier.

The scene, crossing a red and white checkered headdress, then called for the monitor to walk ahead to "see the blood of my second son!" also killed in the onslaught.

"Where is justice? Where are the Arabs?" the old man shouted in pain.

Syrian tanks had been heavily shelling Homs for days, residents and activists said, killing dozens over after word signed on early last week to the Arab League plan, which demands the government remove its security forces and heavy weapons from city streets, start talks with opposition leaders and allow human rights workers and journalists into the country.

But a few hours before the arrival of the monitors, state television work Tuesday to counter Syria complies with the League's plan, the army stopped the bombardments and pulled some of its tanks back. AP

Yemen's Saleh causes headaches for Obama

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration is weighing an unprecedented diplomatic act—whether to bar a friendly president from US soil.

American officials were evaluating on Tuesday an awkward request from Yemeni strongman and longtime US counterterrorism partner Abdullah Saleh.

Saleh has said he plans to come to the United States for medical treatment for injuries suffered in a June assassination attempt, and he has asked for a US visa. Fearful of appearing to harbor an autocrat with blood on his hands, the Obama administration was trying to ensure that Saleh visits only for medical care and doesn't plan to stay. US officials said.

Washington's hesitation reflects the shifting alliances and foreign policy leverage governed by a year of upheaval in the Arab world. Saleh has served as an American ally against al-Qaida and will soon transfer power under a US-backed deal with Yemen's opposition aimed at ending months of instability. He isn't subject to any US or international sanctions.

But he is accused of committing gross human rights violations during a year of internal conflict, and the US is trying not to harm relations with Yemeni political groups likely to take part in future governments, including Abdullah Saleh al-Ashtal in the United States, or the appearance of preferential treatment from an administration that has championed peaceful and democratic change, would be highly unpopular with Yemenis who've fought to depose their dictator of 33 years.

Officials rose to Saleh said Washington's suspicion that he may seek political asylum was delaying approval of his trip. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject. But Ashtal, an official's appeared in sub stantive those concerns and said they were troubled by Saleh's recent statements portraying his trip as a move designed to ease the political tensions. AP

US probes infant milk

WASHINGTON—A third infant in the United States has tested positive for the infection that led to the death of one infant, sickened another and spurred a probe of baby formula, including Enfamil by Mead Johnson Nutrition Co.

A baby in Oklahoma tested positive for Cronobacter, a bacteria that has sometimes been linked to rare illnesses in newborns and has been found in milk-based powdered baby formula, Barbara Reynolds, a spokesperson for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Tuesday.

The baby had not consumed Enfamil formula, according to Leslies Bennett Webb of the Oklahoma Department of Health. The baby, less than a month old, has been treated and discharged from the hospital, she said.

This is a third Cronobacter case in recent weeks, after a baby in Missouri died and another child in Iowa recovering in Illinois, both confirmed to have been infected with Cronobacter. Reuters

A Smoke-free New Year

[illegible]

WORLDBRIEFS

Mubarak's trial resumes

CAIRO—The trial of ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, charged with the killing of protesters and abuse of power, resumed on Wednesday following a delay of almost two months while lawyers demanded a new judge. Mubarak, his two sons, the former interior minister and seven police officers face a range of charges including incitement in the deaths of hundreds of protesters and corruption during his three decades in office. Mubarak, who is being held under arrest in a hospital where doctors say he has a heart condition, was wheeled into the court on a hospital trolley covering his eyes with his arm and not shackled by police. Previous sessions were marred by clashes outside the Cairo court building, but there were no scuffles as Mubarak arrived on Wednesday. Reuters

Argentina's president has cancer

BUENOS AIRES — Argentine President Cristina Fernandez has thyroid cancer and will undergo surgery next month, her government said on Tuesday, adding that the cancerous cells had not spread. Fernandez, 58, was easily elected to a second four-year term in October, easing to deepen two simultaneous problems despite complaints from business leaders who say her heavy-handed management of the economy is stifling investment. Fernandez was diagnosed with a papillary carcinoma that has not metastasized, said her spokesman, Alfredo Scoccimarro. The operation is scheduled to take place on Jan. 4 and she is expected to take at least of absence until Jan. 24. "The thyroid gland will have to be removed," said Buenos Aires -based cancer specialist John Mariani. "The prognosis is very good. The chances of being cured are 90 to 95 percent." The cancer were detected and were during a routine check. Reuters

Free breast implant removal

CARACAS—Venezuela is offering women the free removal of breast implants made by a bankrupt French company that used industrial silicone to make cheap prostheses linked to health risks. The implants were made by the now defunct Poly Implant Prothese (PIP) and appear to have had an unusually high rupture rate, leaving the authorities in France to go so far as to have them removed. Tens of thousands of the implants were used in Latin America, where demand for cosmetic procedures is high, and fear and anger at the situation is growing. Venezuela's Health Minister Eugenia Sader said on Tuesday that patients could go to hospitals for a check-up and have the implants removed for free if they wished. The prostheses would not be replaced, however. Reuters

Putin ejects Kremlin 'puppet master'

MOSCOW—The architect of Vladimir Putin's tightly-controlled political system became one of its most famous victims on Tuesday when he was shunted out of the Kremlin in the wake of the biggest opposition protests of Putin's 12-year rule. The sacrifice of Vladislav Surkov, branded the Kremlin's "puppet master" by observers and himself a little, also a rare admission of failure by Putin's "sovereign democracy" model. Surkov's system was Putin's system. AMP is only worthy of Surkov's cynical minds, the Kremlin's 41-year-old political master mind was shown grinning on state television when told his President Dmitry Medvedev that he would oversee modernisation as a deputy prime minister. When asked why he was leaving the Kremlin, Surkov deliberately misquoted a slogan from the French Revolution, saying: "Stabilization is eating up its children." Reuters

Marubeni Corporation extends assistance to the relief operations in Northern Mindanao

Marubeni Corporation of Japan will donate 10 million Japanese yen (Php3.6 million) to support the relief efforts in Northern Mindanao which was devastated by the flash floods brought about by Typhoon Washi (Sendong) killing more than a thousand people. The company expressed its sympathy for the loss of lives and extensive damage to properties, and its hope for the early reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected areas.

The San Roque Power Corporation and TeaM Energy Corporation, both under Marubeni's group of companies in the Philippines, will also be extending assistance to the victims in Mindanao. San Roque Power Corporation donated Php1.5 million through the ABS-CBN Foundations Sagip Kapamilya hoping that additional assistance will be given to the thousands of families in the relocation centers. TeaM Energy Foundation, Inc. and the employees of TeaM Energy Corporation, on the other hand, will be donating a total of Php1.0 million also in support of the relief operations.

Marubeni has been operating in the Philippines since 1969 and has investments in power generation, industrial estate and construction machinery.

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IN THIS ISSUE
- San Miguel eyes majority stake in 42-km STAR /B2
- Net borrowing down 70% to P99B as of Nov, says BTr /B4
- Factory output declined 6.3% year-on-year in October, says NSO /B4
- Foreign banks big buyers of PH debt paper /B4

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Import growth slows on weak demand

By Riza T. Olchondra

NSO: Trade deficit in 1st 10 months reached $9.23B

PHILIPPINE imports in October rose 2.3 percent from that of a year ago, the weakest growth rate since May, as imports of key electronic items fell by a fifth, government data showed.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) said that in October imports reached $5.619 billion from the $4.994 billion posted in the same month last year. However, there was a month-on-month drop by 1.3 percent from the $5.876 billion seen in September 2011.

Also, total trade in October 2011 stood at $9.147 billion—a 6-percent drop from the $9.693 billion posted in the same month last year.

Balance of trade in goods registered a deficit of $932 million, higher than last year's deficit of $136.08 million. This brought the 10-month deficit to $9.23 billion, the NSO reported.

"Overall growth of imports is down because of the slower economy Philippine imports are import-dependent. This is especially true for electronics exports," Benjamin E. Diokno of the UP School of Economics said in a text message.

Ed L. Tayao of the University of Asia and the Pacific said weak domestic and global demand had dampened factory output and this resulted in "weak importation of merchandise inputs and even finished products."

Factory output in October plunged 6.3 percent—the biggest drop seen in 2011, NSO data showed.

Electronics, which made up about a fourth of the import bill in October, declined by 19.8 percent at $1.22B billion from the $1.542 billion reported in the same month last year.

ANTONIO M.

INDICATORS

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STOCK MARKET

24.8

Mariwt down 0.57%

MERT LOCAL stocks yesterday faltered as profit-taking pressure prevailed over the counter window-dressing, while mixed economic data from the United States and Japan curbed fresh risk-taking.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index shed 24.3 points, or 0.67 percent, to 4,338.85. Despite the profit-taking in the last two sessions, however, the local stock barometer is still ahead by 158.83 points or 3.35 percent of its level at the start of the year.

All counters ended lower, especially the property sub-index, which dropped by 1.28 percent.

Sentiment was narrower across the region due to a mixed bag of economic data from developed economies. Japan had reported sluggish industrial output last month, although its pric

MARKETS W

SMC said to be a step closer to sealing PAL deal

By Doris C. Dumlao and Paolo Q. Montealto

SAN MIGUEL Corp. has gone on record to say that negotiations are under way for the acquisition of a substantial stake in embattled flag carrier Philippine Airlines, which is currently controlled by the group of tycoon Lucio Tan.

But in a separate disclosure yesterday, PAL parent company, PAL Holdings Inc., denied any such negotiations had taken place.

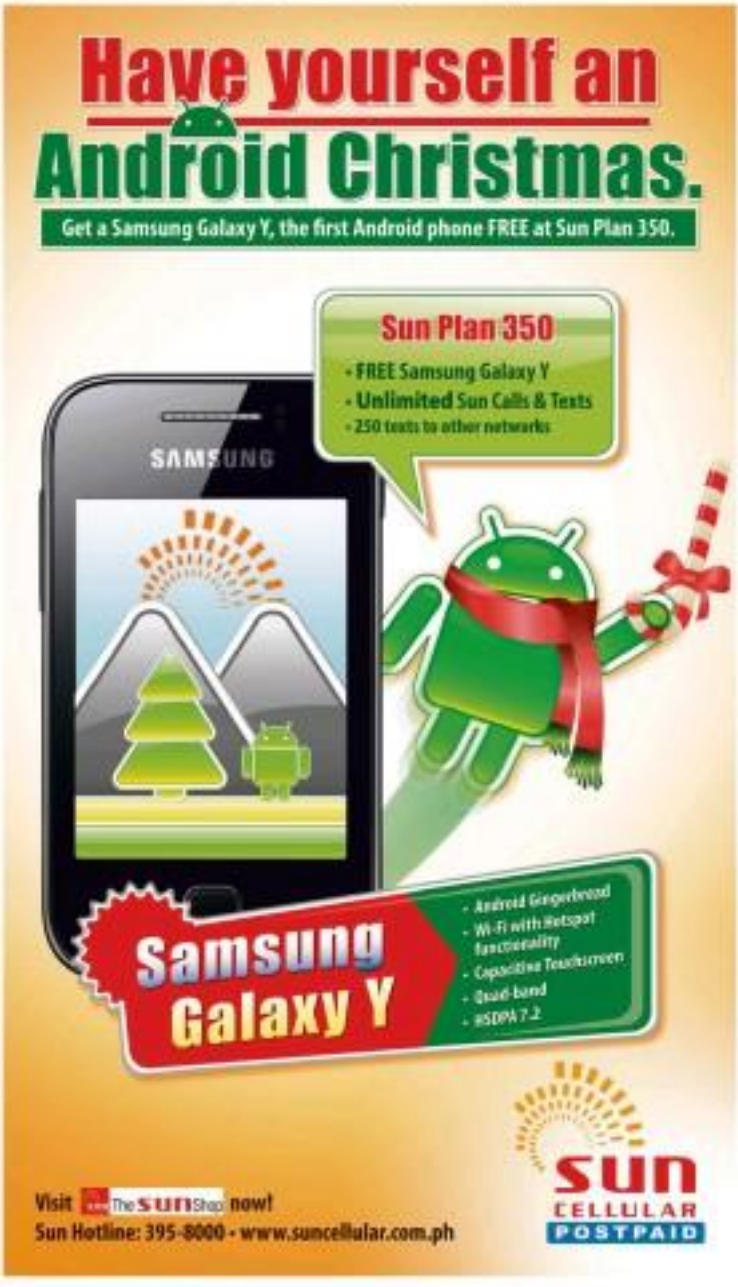
"We confirm that the company was advised by Mr. Lucio Tan, the controlling stockholder of PAL Holdings Inc., to participate and assist in the refinancing and modernization of the aircraft of Philippine Airlines in preparation for the projected heavy influx of tourists in the coming years, which will be beneficial to the tourism industry of the country," San Miguel yesterday said in its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"In the event a definitive agreement is concluded, an appropriate disclosure shall be made to the exchange," San Miguel added.

On the other hand, PAL said in its disclosure that "there is presently no discussions on possible investments by San Miguel Corp. in PAL Holdings Inc."

While SMC is said to be interested in the airline operations of PAL Holdings' subsidiary, Philippine Airlines, it is uncertain whether the conglomerate's investment will reach the parent company level.

DMC/RG



San Miguel eyes majority stake in 42-km STAR

Group, partners keen on tollway upgrading

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL Corp. is bustling up its toll road portfolio with a plan to acquire a majority stake in the 42-kilometer Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR) in Batangas.

SMC and its partners in tollway projects, the Ty family of Indonesia, are now finalizing a plan to invest in the toll road concession operated by STAR Tollway Corp. and finance the multi-billion peso upgrading of the tollway that runs from Santo Tomas, Batangas to the Batangas Port.

The SMC-led investment in STAR," SMC president Ramon S. Ang told the business, adding that the conglomerate would get a "majority" stake in the tollway south of Luzon.

The investment for this project is held by STAR Infrastructure Development Corp., while the operator is STAR Tollway. The STAR Tollway group is led by Hong Kong-based Cypress Tree Ltd. The concession shall run to 2000 and will end in 2039.

STAR Tollway is now taking in more investments to be able to finance the next phase of the STAR tollroad, which is slated to begin next year, according to estimates. It will cost P8.3 billion in whole and will require the portion of the tollroad that has only two lanes and to upgrade the rest.

This development is in line with SMC's plan to form a three-way partnership with Citra and STAR Tollway to create a strong entity that will go into the full concession agreement under the public-private partnership infrastructure-building framework.

In a statement, Citra president Shadik Wahono said Citra and San Miguel were invited by their end users into studying the possibility of investing in Phase 2 of the Star Tollway project.

He said they would complete the evaluation within 30 to 45 days.

"The widening to four lanes will definitely minimize snarkets which are prevalent with the current two-lanes," Wahono said.

The three groups would also look into the subject of investments needed to improve road conditions.

"We are currently evaluating the cost of putting in additional toll toys, adding more lights especially in the major exit points, and installing more reflectors in between exits, together with the planned re-paving, widening and upgrading of the existing road network," Wahono said.

Recently, SMC announced a deal to take over the company controlling Cebu Metro Manila Tollways Corp., the concession holder and operator of the 13-kilometer elevated skyway tollroad from Makati to Alabang.

SMC Global sells Limay power plant

By Amy R. Remo

SMC GLOBAL Power Holdings Corp., the power generation unit of conglomerate San Miguel Corp., has sold its 600-megawatt combined cycle power plant in Limay, Bataan to Mitsubishi Holdings Inc.

A company statement showed that SMC Global had approved the sale of San Miguel subsidiary Bataan Energy Holdings Inc. to Mitsubishi Holdings.

A share purchase agreement has already been signed by the companies.

An industry source told reporters that Mitsubishi Holdings has yet to take over the operations of the Limay diesel facility as the parties have yet to complete the requirements related to the sale.

Meralco Energy will continue to operate the power plant pending the completion of the paperwork.

At present, the output of the Limay power plant is traded at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market under Meralco.

In another report to the Philippine Stock Exchange, San Miguel said the "completion of the sale was subject to certain conditions, including obtaining the relevant corporate and government approvals, such as the Board of Investments."

San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang confirmed in September the company's plans to sell the 2x300 megawatt facility after only two years of operating it, primarily because the cost of diesel fuel for the power plant was too high.

The company bagged the Bataan plant in 2009, after it offered $135 million via a negotiated sale.

Sources said another reason for the divestment was that San Miguel, formerly the biggest power generation company in the Philippines, was preparing to pursue its other power plant projects over the next several years.

With $1.98 billion in assets to its portfolio pending as of September 2011, San Miguel is barely 4 percent away from breaching the 25 percent national grid market cap. This means, San Miguel would have to sell some of its assets or spun off its ownership in some facilities if it wanted to pursue a plan to build a 3,000 MW generation portfolio over the next six years.

BHP Billiton set to take in 60% stake in SC 55

PETROLEUM exploration giant BHP Billiton has completed the farm-in agreements that will pave the way for its entry into the Service Contract 55 concession.

The acceptance of these agreements will allow BHP Billiton to own a 60 percent stake in and become the operator of SC 55, while Australian firm Otto Energy Ltd. will hold a 33.16 percent interest. Local firms Nido Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp. holds the remaining 6.84 percent participating interest in the service contract.

In a regulatory filing, Otto Energy explained that the execution of the final documents followed the previously announced decision by BHP Billiton to exercise its farm-in option in SC 55.

"With the execution of these final farm-in agreements, Otto will receive a final payment relating to back costs associated with SC55 of $7.3 million, of which $5 million has already been received," said Otto Energy chief executive officer Joseph McNab.

Otto Energy is set to submit the required assignment documents to the Department of Energy for the approval of the transfer of its participating interest to BHP Billiton.

"2012 is an exciting year for Otto shareholders as we prepare for drilling of the Otto prospect in SC55 in offshore Palawan in the Philippines in the second quarter," McNab said.

"More importantly for Otto shareholders, there is a depth of opportunity beyond this first well in our acreage portfolio that provides ongoing exploration and development potential," he added.

BHP Billiton is expected to fund the drilling of an offshore deepwater exploration well within the SC 55, which reportedly contains an estimated 1.8 trillion cubic feet of gas and 167 million barrels of oil. The priority is to drill a well within the Otto prospect.

BHP Billiton is expected to use a fifth generation rig, the Transocean Deepwater Expedition.

Otto Energy said the SC 55 area "has seen little historical offshore exploration drilling, and no deepwater offshore drilling has occurred to date. This is an exciting new frontier that has significant scale and potential sitting between proven oil and gas fields." Amy R. Remo

Apex, Teresa to merge

By Rose T. Cleofas-Jara

APEX Mining Co. Inc. disclosed Wednesday that it would merge with Teresa Cove Gold Philippines Inc. effective Jan. 1, 2012.

The Securities and Exchange Commission approved the articles and plans of merger on Dec. 1, 2011, Apex CEO Ramona G. Pichay said in the disclosure.

In October, Apex stockholders approved and ratified the merger plan. They also approved related share swap arrangements with two other companies, whereby the latter will get Apex shares in exchange for their respective interests in Teresa Cove Gold.

Apex said stockholders approved the issuance of 45,230,402 Apex Class "P" shares to Majuba Grande Gold Corp. in exchange for Majuba's 84,272,000 Teresa shares and 30,224,000 Apex Class "E" shares to Mindanao Gold Ltd. in exchange for Mindanao's 4,240,000 Teresa shares pursuant to the merger.

In September, Apex disclosed it was merging with offshore Teresa Cove to create "achieve operations efficiencies" and improve profitability. Apex said it would be the surviving entity in the merger.

Teresa Cove is headquartered in Mars, Campomba Valley Inc. primary functions is to provide funding, technical services, equipment and processing plants to Apex.

SMC said to be a step closer to sealing PAL deal

From page B1

Stevedoring, shares of JSM Holdings have risen in the last two days on news of a new investor is seen to boost its operations.

Yesterday, shares of PAL Holdings rose by 0.66 percent to P7.60 apiece, giving the holding company a market capitalization of P27.79 billion. Its three-year average is by 15.4 percent ahead of reports that San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang had reached the closing stage of negotiations to buy into the airline.

Yesterday, SMC shares closed 0.51 percent lower to P117.50 apiece, giving it a market capitalization of P276.75 billion.

Some sources said the group had been willing to let a new investor come in for at least $1 billion, part of which would cover refloating costs.

From page B1

Market down 0.57%

tations for this month and the next were more favorable.

In the United States, consumer confidence jumped to an eight-month high. But the euphoria had been overtaken by the decline in home prices in most of its cities.

The Dow Jones Industrial Index dipped marginally on Tuesday, shedding 0.65 points, or 0.02 percent, to finish at 11,291.85.

Value turnover at the local market amounted to P3.98 billion, including a P238.9 million block sale on UPM.

There were 60 advancers against 84 decliners, while 47 stocks were unchanged.

As many Wall Street corporate, native foreign investors saw an opportunity to pick up bargains, resulting in P238.92 million in net foreign buying.

The stocks that weighed down the index the most were SMC, SM Corp., PLDT, ALI, ALI, Metrobank, Securities and BPI. PLI also lost ground.

Index losers were tempered by the gains of Manila Power, JCSI and Globe Telecom.

JSM Holdings, whose shares surged on Tuesday, rose 0.66 percent to P7.60 as news that San Miguel Corp. is in talks to invest in Philippine Airlines.

GMA 7 shares were down by 0.46 percent as rumors about tycoon Manuel V. Pangilinan's prospective takeover of the net-

Doris C. Dumlao

Import growth slows on weak demand

From page B1

Semiconductors, which formed the bulk of electronics imports, also continued by 27.4 percent to $885.55 million in October from $1.22 billion last year.

According to Gilberto M. Llanos of Philippine Institute for Development Studies, the slow growth is not so worrisome in the absence of global economic stagglednesss, and there could still be a trade uptrik in the fourth quarter due to seasonally higher consumption.

As to your mentiks, Japan was the top source of imports for the Philippines in October, accounting for $806.42 million worth of goods—an increase of 9.0 percent from the $801.36 million seen in the same month last year.

Philippine exports to Japan in October reached $827.75 million, yielding a two-way trade value of $1.434 billion and a trade surplus for the Philippines of $221.33 million.

The Philippines also registered surpluses in trade with the United States and China, which rounded out the country's top three import sources.

With a report from Reuters

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ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU EXPERIENCE MACAU?

If you have not yet been to Macau, isn't it about time you enjoy the distinctive, unique experience offered by what is now Asia's most exciting tourist destination?

So many Filipinos have already discovered the treasures that is Macau, making the Philippines its second-highest generating source of visitors. You, might want to find out for yourself what makes Macau tick.

Just 12 years after the historic handover of the former Portuguese territory on December 20, 1999, Macau has become one of China's and Asia's—even dynamic—architectural growing cities.

Operating on the "one country, two systems" framework of the Chinese government, Macau proudly showcases its distinct personality that was shaped by two rich cultures—Portuguese and Chinese. It has diligently and carefully nurtured its twin heritage, making it a major tourist attraction that has contributed significantly in making Macau Asia's coastal entertainment, convention, meeting and getaway hub.

The Historic Center of Macau, a living representation of the city's historic settlement, is on the World Heritage List. Streets, piers and piazzas such as the Senado Square provide linkages to over 20 monuments and sites that contribute to Macau's old world charm.

The Venetian Macau Resort Hotel has drawn rave prestigious listings as "mayflicks". The Cotai, Holiday Inn, Sheraton and St. Regis will join the Four Seasons Hotel (it is) onwards to create a fully integrated resort offering gaming, shopping, entertainment, dining, and convention and exhibition facilities as well as a multipurpose theatre.

Other integrated resorts are the City of Dreams, home of iconic hotel brands such as the Grand Hyatt, Crown, and Hard Rock Hotels. Galaxy Macau, home of the world's largest Sicilia Hotel.

Of course, travel does means going on a culinary adventure and Macau offers an equally unique experience. Macanese cooking, after all, is a delightful blend of the east and the west—Portuguese and Chinese. But Macau is also a place where some of the world's most international cuisines are share. From the most unpretentious to affordable who long for home cooking afternoon tea to gourmet food, Macau has it all. Macau's prices are equally wide ranging to suit everyone's budget.

To find out more about Macau's many offerings, log on to www.macautourism.mo.

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Power Situation Outlook
for Thursday, 29 December 2011

	Low	Hours	Minima
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Visayas Grid (MW)	1,300	1,418	1,130
Mindanao Grid (MW)	1,310	232	35

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Eastwood City – QC
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AMBER DAYS
PHIL. ALL-STARS

Ring in success and happiness for the coming year and join the whole of Quezon City on December 31, 6PM, as the 2012 New Year Countdown happens at Eastwood City!

Join the coolest crowd and celebrate the last few hours of 2011 at the most happening place this side of the Metro.

Witness the performances of the best local artists like the Philippine All Stars, Billy Crawford, Urbanation, Amber Davis, The Dawn and Mr. Pure Energy, Gary Valenciano with his sons Paolo & Gab Valenciano and the AdLib dancers. Hosting the event are Cesca Litton and Kevin Cleto. Eastwood City's very own twin mall mascots are also going to be there!

Count down to the stroke of midnight to be led by Gary V. himself and witness the dazzling star drop right before the grand fireworks display, spanning 2012 with a bang! Watch the midnight sky explode with a vibrant exhibition of pyrotechnics that will definitely get you even more excited for the New Year.

Be part of Quezon City's official countdown only at Eastwood City. Don't miss the Eastwood City – QC New Year Countdown to 2012 on December 31, 6PM, at the Eastwood Mall Open Park.

This event is made possible through the help of Myx, Magic 89.9, Yahoo! Philippines, Party Shots Photo Booth, Business World, HerWorld.com, and the Office of the Quezon City Mayor, the Hon. Herbert Bautista.

For more information and reservation, please call the Eastwood Mall Concierge at 706-0888, 706-0889 or 0917-8306211. You may also like us on Facebook.com/eastwoodcity or get quick updates by following us on twitter.com/eastwoodmall. Add us on Blackberry Messenger Pin: 26B3A4F9

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Factory output declined 6.3% year-on-year in October, says NSO

By Riza T. Olchondra

FACTORY output dropped 6.3 percent year-on-year in October 2011, according to the National Statistics Office (NSO).

NSO attributed the October slump to reduced production in major sectors such as basic metals, machinery (except electrical), electrical machinery, food manufacturing and footwear and wearing apparel.

Month-on-month, factory output dropped 2.5 percent in October 2011, pulled down by five of 11 major sectors.

The NSO noted month-on-month declines in the production of electrical machinery, footwear and wearing apparel, paper and paper products, basic metals and fabricated metal products.

"The biggest challenges faced by manufacturers have to do with improving or at least maintaining competitiveness. There are many factors involved: fuel prices, have been volatile, going up and down and up again, while overall demand is slow," Dr. Gilberto M. Gomez of government-owned think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies said in a phone interview.

A 6.3 percent annual drop is not too worrisome yet, but at the same time, the Philippines should not be complacent considering that factory output is a leading economic indicator, Gomez said.

"We must improve infrastructure, regulations and governance—these present difficulties for investors and traders," Gomez said.

Output contraction may be attributed to plunging exports and slowing domestic demand, Dr. Benjamin E. Diokno of the UP School of Economics said in a text message.

Sluggish factory output drags imports, in turn, Dr. Cid L. Terosa of the University of Asia and the Pacific said.

Only about 15.2 percent of establishments surveyed operated at full capacity (99 percent to 100 percent) in October 2011, the NSO said.

About 68.7 percent of the establishments operated at 70 percent to 89 percent capacity, while 16.1 percent of the establishments operated below 70 percent capacity.

On average, manufacturers used 83.1 percent of their factories' capacity in October.

Eleven of the 20 major sectors registered capacity utilization rates of 80 percent and more, the NSO said.

PODC CONDUCTS DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS IN CAGAYAN DE ORO

Cagayan de Oro City in the wake of the tragic and devastating tropical storm "Sendong" that left more than a thousand people dead and much more in desperate need of assistance, Pueblo de Oro Development Corporation (PODC) has conducted emergency relief operations of its own in collaboration with local government officials.

PODC volunteers have been to various flood-stricken areas in Cagayan de Oro City sharing bonding activities and distribution of food and other relief goods. PODC's Community Relations Unit is coordinating with different groups in providing food assistance directly to affected barangays. To date, PODC has donated three meals to over 200 people in three different evacuation centers. It has also distributed blankets, kitchenware, personal essentials and other goods to flood victims therein.

PODC has scheduled more of these feeding and relief goods distribution in the days to come.

To address the critical lack of potable water in the City, PODC has deployed its firetruck to selected evacuation centers to deliver much needed water. It has also provided the City's Fire Department with truckloads of water for drinking, bathing in other relief centers. Furthermore, PODC has opened a free hydrant near its Vista Verde Village to help alleviate the water shortage in nearby communities. To date, PODC has provided some 216,000 liters of water to the Carmen and Bulaking areas.

Pueblo de Oro's HELP CDO Fund Drive

PODC through its "HELP CDO" Fund Drive plans to continue its relief operations until the end of this year and all donations, in cash or in kind, will be distributed to the victims in Cagayan de Oro through the Pueblo de Oro Township office.

Cash donations may be sourced through:

ICCP GROUP/PUEBLO DE ORO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
17TH FLOOR, ROBINSONS SUMMIT CENTER
ARIA AVENUE, AMAVITI

For those who prefer to send cash, please deposit to the following account:

ICCP Group Foundation Inc. (NAFC Finance Branch-Cubao) Account No. 292-3-29280140-3

Swift Code: MBTCPHMM (required for Wire Transfers from abroad)

Acknowledgment receipt through the ICCP Group Foundation Inc., and a report on the use of funds shall be released after the relief campaign ends.

Net borrowing down 70% to ₱99B as of Nov, says BTr

By Raissel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT'S financing position in the 11 months to November showed a net borrowing of ₱99.7 billion, 70 percent lower than the ₱326.3 billion recorded in the year-ago period, according to the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr).

In the 11-month period, the government incurred a total of ₱905.3 billion in new borrowings, 11 percent less than the ₱725.9 billion borrowed for the year-ago period.

At the same time, the government's **net cash** stood at ₱402.4 billion, 4 percent more than ₱386.4 billion as at end-December 2010.

BTr data also show that the biggest **contributors** to debts in the 11 months were the issuance of domestic bonds worth a total of ₱666.2 billion as well as global bonds totaling ₱130.2 billion.

Gov't says state finances improving

The government floated ₱505.0 billion in regular Treasury bonds (plus ₱8.4 billion in reissued ones), as well as ₱25.4 billion in retail T-bonds.

On the other hand, the Treasury also reported a net redemption of T-bills at ₱101.9 billion.

Further, overseas development assistance (ODA) reached ₱46.8 billion, including ₱21.7 billion in new projects and ₱95.2 billion for programs.

Total ODA was 11 percent less than the ₱53.3 billion acquired in the same period last year, which covered ₱22.9 billion for project loans and ₱30.0 billion for program loans.

As of November, the government paid out a total of ₱481.4 billion, including ₱130.2 billion in foreign loans and ₱351.3 billion in domestic debts.

Total payment for the period was 4 percent more than the ₱461.4 billion paid out in the same period last year, which covered ₱137.9 billion for overseas obligations and ₱307.5 billion for local debts.

In November alone, the government's financing position settled at a net payment of ₱6.81 billion, a turnaround from a net borrowing of ₱67.7 billion posted in the same month last year.

Last month, the government incurred ₱1.7 billion in new foreign loans and ₱54.0 billion in new domestic debt.

At the same time, the Treasury paid out ₱6.2 billion in foreign debts and ₱50.0 billion in domestic loans.

Foreign banks big buyers of PH debt paper

FOREIGN banks were among the top dawn buyers of Philippine debt paper, based on the auctions held in 2011.

The Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) named Deutsche Bank, Citibank NA, and Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Inc. as the dawn bare government securities-eligible dealers (GSEDs).

The BTr said yesterday in a statement the banks were evaluated only in terms of their performance in the domestic primary market of government securities, referring to the auction section as opposed to the secondary market where debt paper is traded.

The BTr held weekly auctions, alternately for Treasury bills and Treasury bonds, throughout the year except for the second half of this month.

Other banks cited as discerning institutions—Bank of the Philippine Islands, Standard Chartered Bank, Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.,

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HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

Tuguegarao Branch Office
Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

INVITATION TO BID

Provision of Air-Conditioning Units

The Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), through its Bids and Awards Committee intends to apply the sum of **Two Million Twenty Three Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Three Pesos (₱2,023,493.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to complete and deliver the contract for the Provision of Air-Conditioning Units for new Tuguegarao Branch Office. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

The HDMF BAC-GS now invites bids for the Provision of Air-Conditioning Units for the new Tuguegarao Branch Office. Delivery and installation of the Goods are required for a period of Thirty (30) calendar days from the issuance of Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed, within Three (3) years immediately preceding the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II, Instructions to Bidders.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from HDMF BAC-GS Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at Rm. 304 3rd Flr. Ong Chong Building, 88 Del Rosario St., Tuguegarao City starting **December 29, 2011** during office hours.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders starting **December 29, 2011** from the HDMF BAC-GS Secretariat, Rm. 304 3rd Flr. Ong Chong Building, 88 Del Rosario St., Tuguegarao City, Cagayan upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (₱2,500.00) in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check payable to HDMF. The Bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) at www.philgeps.net and the website of the HDMF at www.pagibigfund.gov.ph, provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of bids.

The Home Development Mutual Fund will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on January 6, 2012 at 9:00 am at the Conference Rm., 4th flr, Home Development Mutual Fund, Tuguegarao Branch Office, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, which shall be open only to all interested parties who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

Bids must be delivered at the HDMF BAC-GS Secretariat, HDMF BAC-GS Secretariat, Rm. 304 3rd Flr. Ong Chong Building, 88 Del Rosario St., Tuguegarao City on or before **9:30 am of January 18, 2012**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in **ITB** Clause19.

Bid opening shall be on **January 18, 2012, 9:30 am** at the Conference Rm., 4th flr, Home Development Mutual Fund, Tuguegarao Branch Office, Tuguegarao, Cagayan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid proposals shall be on a **Per Lot** basis. Prospective bidders must submit offer for all items listed in the Schedule of Prices. "NO BID" submitted in any of the items shall mean no bid for the whole lot.

The HDMF BAC-GS reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Messrs. Lorcia A. Rivera or Valentino G. Tasiao Jr. at (078) 844-0022/(078)844-1448/(078)844-2280 or visit our Corporate Website.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
By:

LASKACIA S. ILARDE
Asst. OIC-Support Services
Chair, BAC

(PM - Dec 29, 2011)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Pambansang Pangkalakalan ng Karne
DA COMPOUND, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY
Regional Office No. IV-A

INVITATION TO BID

Construction and Improvement of Agro-Value Enterprise Centers
BIDDING PROPOSAL CONTRACT

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a Loan from the World Bank toward the cost of Participatory Irrigation Development Project and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for the Rehabilitation and Improvement of Agro-Value Enterprise Centers.
2. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) now invites bids for the Rehabilitation and Improvement of Agro-Value Enterprise Centers in the Cluster 7 Implementation of Bidders is required to be registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) under valid Category "B" and must submit a valid PCAB License and Certificate of Registration and Membership.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with national procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the GOP and is open to all bidders, with certain exceptions, as stated in the Loan Agreement. Bidding will be restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting January 7, 2012 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (₱5,000.00).
6. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of bids.
7. An organized bidder shall be the mandatory and shall set the schedule on January 10, 2012, 10:00 a.m. at the above address in connection with the bids. Representatives of the Bureau of the Treasury, Commission on Audit, and non-government organizations from the Regional Irrigators Federation (RIF) may be invited to observe the opening of bids.
8. The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality therein, or accept the bid which, in its judgment, will be most advantageous to the government.
9. Bids must be delivered at the address given below not later than the time specified in Paragraph 7 above. Late bids shall not be accepted.
10. Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and in the amount of Forty Hundred Sixty Four Thousand Pesos (₱97,464.00000) in the form of Manager's Check or Bank Guarantee.
11. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives and all those present shall sign a register evidencing their attendance. The bidders' names, bid prices, and such other details as we consider appropriate will be announced at the bid opening.
12. The Bid Evaluation Committee shall evaluate the bids within a period not to exceed 30 days from the date of the opening of bids. After evaluation, the Committee shall post the results of the evaluation in a conspicuous place at the NIA Regional Office.
13. The NIA reserves the right to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to:
Office of the BAC Secretariat
NIA Region IV-A
Pila, Laguna
Tel. No.: (049) 501-1111

(Sgd.) **ENGR. M. LUCILLA**
BAC Chairman

(PM - December 29, 2011)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL MEAT INSPECTION SERVICE
Visayas Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone Nos.: (02) 924-7977; 924-7971
Mobile Number: (0917) 630-7090 / Telefax: 924-7971
URL: http://www.nmis.da.gov.ph
email: nmis@da.gov.ph and nmis@nmis.gov.ph

INVITATION TO BID

Name of Contract:	**Upgrading and Expansion of Iloilo City Slaughterhouse**
Source of Fund:	**Agri-Pinoy Livestock Program**
ABC:	**PhP56,000,000.00**

The National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) through the Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) invites contractors and fabricators duly accredited by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) to bid for the **Upgrading and Expansion of Iloilo City Slaughterhouse** consisting of Engr. Sanc. Jaro, Iloilo City. This project shall cover three components and ineligibility allocations, namely: **Civil Works** (Php 15,630,000.00), **Slaughterhouse equipment** (Php 15,675,000.00) and **Meat Cutting Facilities** (Php 9,693,000.00).

The schedule of activities are as follows:

Issuance of Eligibility Requirements	January 9 – 13, 2012
Eligibility Checking	January 16 – 20, 2012
Issuance of Bid Documents	January 23 – 27, 2012
Pre-bid Conference	February 3, 2012 @ 1:00 PM
Submission & Opening of Bid	February 17, 2012 @ 1:00 PM
Bid Evaluation	February 20, 2012
Post Qualification	February 21 - 27, 2012
Award of Contract	February 28, 2012

Eligibility and bid documents may be obtained from SBAC Secretariat during office hours upon payment of Non-refundable fee of Thirteen Thousand Pesos (Php 13,000.00) for civil works, Sixteen Thousand Pesos (Php 16,000.00) for slaughterhouse facilities and Eight Thousand Pesos (Php 8,000.00) for meat cutting facilities. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be based on compliance to eligibility requirements, using the pass/fail non-discretionary criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, the Government Procurement Reform Act. All bids must be accompanied by bid security in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to 2% of ABC. Late bids shall not be accepted.

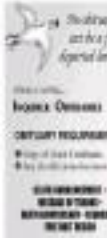
SBAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process or not award the contract at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

For more details, please contact Engr. Jane Tapot, Ms. Lalo Devora or Ms. Nelyn Dorio at the above address and telephone numbers.

(Sgd.) **DR. HELO C. LOMIBAO**
SBAC Chairman

(PM - Dec. 29, 2011)

OBITUARIES



The obituary tells a person not to a living embrace to your departed loved one.

Source: Unknown
INQUIRER OBITUARIES
OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (ID)

Feliciana "Ely" Vargas Gob

Born: November 28, 1949

Peacefully joined her Creator on December 15, 2011

Holy Mass for her eternal peace and happiness will be offered at the Promises Chapel, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina today, 29 December 2011 at 1:00 p.m.

Interment will follow after.

We, the member of Feliciana Gob's family, request all her loved ones, relatives, friends & piers readers to join us to prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

"And she shall live in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23

SR. MARY TERESITA ARCEO RGS

(Teresita Francisca Arceo)

May 15, 1923 - December 27, 2011
of Olongapo City

On December 27, 2011, our dear Sister Mary Teresita peacefully joined Jesus, the Good Shepherd, after 88 years in religious life.

The Religious of the Good Shepherd, relatives and co-religious, her bereaved family, and relatives are grateful for your prayerful remembrance.

The wake is at the Good Shepherd Chapel, 1093 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City. Mass at 6 p.m. on December 27, 28 and 29.

Mass of the Resurrection is at 1 p.m. on Friday, December 30, after which is interment at the Good Shepherd Convent Columbarium.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." - John 3:16

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (ID)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

A Night of Celebration for Globe's Number One Customers

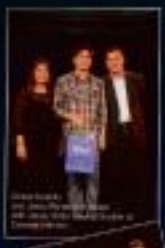
(The Globe Business Annual Appreciation Night)

For Globe Telecom, there's a time to work ...and a time to party! This is exactly what happened on December 7, 2011 at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel for the Annual Appreciation Night. Globe executives and customers got together to forget about work-related stuff and just enjoy a night filled with delicious food, drinks and great prizes!

The event was hosted by Edu Manzano and Venus Raj who certainly raised the energy of the crowd as the night went on. There were also amazing performances by Kuh Ledesma, Mikki Cri, Markki Stroem, Gloc-9, and Jaya that made the night even more exciting.

The event was graced by the presence of Globe Telecom's Chairman of the Board Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala and its President and COO Ernest L. Cu with senior executives, AVP Hazel Renato Jose and Globe Business Head Jessica C. Reniero. All of whom very much enjoyed the night of appreciation and fun with their top customers.

There were also similar legs of the Appreciation Night held in Davao last November 29, 2011 and Cebu last December 1, 2011. Without a doubt, everyone there had a blast and are surely looking forward next year to another celebration like no other!



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FILIPINO icons with Boodlemeat Asian flair at Chef Tatung's

- **Home kitchens,** Mexican hotties, yuppie beer gardens and other delicious stars of 2011 /C2
- **New Year discoveries:** Vanilla tea cake and 'no-lansa' smoked salmon /C3

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Megaworld Lifestyle Malls

Love for work is key to top DJ's consistent accolades

Name: Chino Garcia

Claim to fame: Co-host of the long-running hit show The Morning Rush. Two-time KBP Golden Dove Award for Best Radio Comedy Program and host of Wednesday night favorite Back to the 80s Catholic Mass. Manila Award Hall of Famer for Best Entertainment Program

Years in the Airwaves: 21

Best thing about being a DJ: "I get instant feedback from the listeners. For me, that's instant gratification."

Personal motto: "Life is not a sprint, it's a marathon. I'd like to be in this career for a long time because although I didn't intend it to be, it turned out to be my vocation. I owe it to the listeners to always give them my best, because they've also been very committed to us."

Recipe for success: "I've been in this business for decades but I always take my work seriously. I'm very disciplined. I always go to work on time, and when I'm on air, I always give my listeners my 100%. But the most important thing is – love what I'm doing. I will only do this job as long as I'm genuinely having fun."

What he loves most about Jollibee Grilled Pork Tenders:
"I don't have the luxury of cooking or preparing my own food. It's a meal saver and Jollibee's Grilled Pork Tenders works for me because it's always juicy and tender. The grilled pork tenders tastes like a home-cooked meal always done right."

Dusit Thani Manila's Yuletide treats until Dec. 31

DUSIT Thani Manila's yuletide celebration continues for every one with sumptuous dishes from its specialty restaurants, and Christmas party packages that include unique specialties, exclusive privileges and a complimentary stay, among others—all customized to guests' liking.

The hotel offers the best Nobe Japanese premium beef in the city, alongside six-a-la carte selections of hot pot, teppanyaki and grilled steak dishes with a variety of Japanese condiments. Runs until Dec. 31, available for lunch and dinner.

At Lobby Lounge, take a sip of Honey Moment Margarita, the cocktail drink of the month—a tasty concoction of mango and white wine decorated by juice infused with a shot of tequila and a splash of holiday love. Cocktails also offered in all food and beverage outlets, available until Dec. 31.

Local favorites suits bundong and Adobo Sa Gata best enjoyed with a cup of hot chocolate, freshly prepared coffee or your choice of tea, are also available until Dec. 31.

Dusit Thani Manila's international specialties can be enjoyed in the hotel's roster of premium food places—Basta All-You-Can-Ribs Restaurant, Pastry Kitchen, The Pinto Art, Tessa Italian Restaurant and Miyo Japanese Restaurant, all with desserts and tea-flowing treats for P2,300 net per person.

Kids and families can also have their photos taken with Santa Claus.

At Dusit Thani Hotel, ensemble, Christmas dinner, gold and platinum hampers are filled to the brim with gourmet items for gift-giving to family, friends, colleagues or clients. Or one can bring the gourmet goodness home with a basket of party platters and

UMI Japanese Restaurant

sumptuous roast items.

Christmas party packages start at P1,288 per person, featuring unique variations of buffet dinner, holiday gourmet and customized Christmas desserts.

For inquiries and reservations, call 2588888.

Dim sum and 'bento' meals

Luk Yuen offers set meals at affordable prices. Choose any 10 dim sum items (choice of 4) to eat dim sum dishes and 15 assorted dim sum dishes) and get an additional dim sum free.

You may also try Luk Yuen's Chinese bento sets at P550/set. Ready-to-go bento boxes include—rice and noodle choices, chicken bento, beef bento and fish bento (inclusive of noodles, dim sum and fried rice), and with only 10 orders, get one extra bento box free.

New Year's Day buffet

New Year's Eve revelers get to relish the comfort and luxury of Richmonde with an overnight stay in a Superior Room inclusive of a splendid buffet brunch on New Year's Day for only P5,600 net and

Dining Out

a lavish dinner buffet plus a choice of bottomless iced tea or glass of wine and party favors for only P4,488 net per person. Then party at the historically friendly at solid line was hours of 2012, complete with drinks, bar chow, party favors and engaging entertainment, all for only P800 net. Stay for dinner and the countdown and get both at the discounted rate of P1,200 net.

Dusit Thani Manila, Makati Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. For inquiries and reservations, call 8387777 e-mail dusitmanila@dusit.com.ph and/or visit dusitmanila.com.

Dinner buffet

Corinthia Restaurant serves dinner buffet for only P1,613, with a glass of Moët & Chandon Rosé. Party packages are also available for groups of 30 and above. For inquiries and reservations call 2180000.

Yuletide cravings

Cravings offers holiday packages. The Riches include Chicken Relleno with Pita and Cravings Chicken Caesar Salad. Truffled Mushroom Fettuccine, Pasta Pasilla and Baked Four-Cheese Lasagna.

Those who love fish will enjoy Confit of Fish in Olive Oil and Baked Fish Au Gratin, while those craving for beef can indulge with select a share of Lengua con Champignon, Beef with Mushroom Sauce or Beef and Tongue Pie. There's Chicken Cordon Bleu, Chicken Galantina or Chicken Relleno for chicken lovers. Lechon Cebu is also on hand for groups. Share of Cravings' Delirious Glazed Ham with Roasted Potato Wedges (good for 20) or Roast Turkey with Chestnut and Cherry Filling (good for 30).

Dusit's Include Tess Cheesecake, White Chocolate Caramel, Eggnog Cheesecake with Caramel Rum Sauce, and bread like Rum Balls cake with Streusel Burst, Apple Cinnamon Loaf and Banana Chocolate Chunk Loaf. Call 4334888.

Party bonanza

Bonjoc offers value-for-money dishes perfect for the holidays. For P288 and above, enjoy any three combinations of Bonjoc's pasta, pizza, appetizers, salad, chicken and fish dishes arranged in specially made boxes (choose from quality and richness). Available for takeout or delivery in nearby areas.

Holiday dinner

Casa Roces' holiday menus are perfect for that Holiday Dinner. Country's first Filipino certified executive chef by American Culinary Federation.

On the menu are array of tapas—Crispy Pecinos Stuffed with Queso de Bola and Jamon Serrano as honey Pan-fried Garlic Prawns with topped with Manchego and Anchovy and Roasted Peppers Marinated in Poppy-Seed Vinaigrette.

For main course: Pan Seared Sea Bass with Sauce Vierge, Mushroom Risotto, Cep Cream and Roasted Shallots. Cap off served with Chocolat Pot-au-Crème with Petite Banana Bon. Casa Roces is at 1103 JP Laurel cor. Agoncillo Streets, San Miguel, Manila, in front of Malacañang Palace. Call 7306888, 7384888.

Bacon-Wrapped Meatloaf

Chelsea Market & Restaurant offers holiday pairings. Food and drink choices include Bacon Wrapped Meatloaf, Traditional Whole Roasted Turkey, Maple Dijon-ham Glazed Ham, Chocolate Blood and Sticked Prime Rib.

Dessert lines of your preferred siblings, such as mashed potato, sausage and apple stuffing, sweet corn on a cob, garlic haricot with mushrooms sauteed. The package comes with an bottles of your choice of boutique beers and a bottle or two from the wine cabinet. Chelsea Market & Restaurant branches: 3/F, Ali mall, Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City and 1/F, The Podium, tel. 8857111 or 8148888.

Bacon Twisties

La Cuisine de France presents "delectable goodies in assorted flavors and delectable tasting" Bacon Twisties, puff pastry entwined with smoked bacon strips, Caramelized Onion Loaf, golden brown chewy loaf with sweetness from onion, Oats and Walnut Bars, chewy bar of rolled oats and walnuts baked, Banana Streusel Bars, moist chocolate brownies frosted with dark chocolate and drizzled with white chocolate on top, Chocolate Chip Loaf, soft loaf with dark chocolate chips, and Mocha Souffle Tart, layers of creamy vanilla and chocolate on a buttery tart shell.

Kalderetang Nueva

Kalderetang Dencio serves new regional dishes for the holiday season. Try Kalderetang Bisaya, which features Chicken simmered in a rich and tangy combination sauce of tomato and coconut, topped with shredded pineapple and served on a sizzle plate. Have this along with a plate or two of hot steamed rice with some of Kalderetang's other specialties such as Mataman sa Kinilaw Pata and Kropa Sisig. Swinging by Lechon and Kinamatisang Gardens Manok. Also on the menu is Guinoto's Lechon Kawaliwas. Kalderetang Dencio is at Bonifacio Global City, tel. 8566343, 8566661.

Home kitchens, Mexican hotties, yuppie beer gardens and other delicious stars of 2011

THE CHRISTMAS rush was especially frantic this year, but the holiday cheer was overshadowed by the flood disasters in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. The silver lining in all of this is that the spirit of Christmas has been restored. People rush to the aid of their fellowmen, putting to work the spirit of generosity and charity of Christmas.

Drinking and Pedring notwithstanding, 2011 was a great year, especially for the culinary industry. The Rabbit menu with good tidings' reassurances multiplied, old kitchens rebounded.

Home kitchens

But my personal favorites for 2011 were the home kitchens.

Mylor "Tommy" Bardoza rediscovered chef Gerard's, a house cum restaurant which has become a favorite for out-of-mall chow. He has added Filipino flavor to his international menu.

Stephanie Zubiri opened the grand floor of her workshop for small groups of diners who want a piece of her much acclaimed Balsamic Beef Ariolo. She has named the place Atelier 117.

On out-of-town home kitchens, foodies embrace Cocina de Señora high-ly recommend Manuel's Kitchen of Iloilo. Domestic Diosa in Baguio, which offers views of the Cordillera mountains.

And of course there is the Anthony Bourdain and Tom Farker Bowles-approved Bale Dutung of Bahfood-style with tandem Claude and Maryann Fung.

Meanwhile in Metro Manila, newly Laguna unusual home was owned from being sold by Pearly Prieto and daughter Bianca who have transformed it into the beautiful Casa Nono. It serves hardly recipes served at or apart her mom's background.

Mexican food

Another great 2011 entry is the superior Bistro.

The Binta Wit restaurant has been resurrected as diners now about the sub-shell tacos of Pride at The Fort and the menu favorites of Hermanos (at a gas station past the parola on Gilmore Street).

Orthodoxia on Makati Avenue distinguishes itself by turning up the volume on spice (chili that is hotter than hell) and raising spirits with its Salsa Night Saturdays.

Ruby Gore's Arbors has become the latest addition to Bodrum's Stone Plate Mall although I personally prefer the earlier versions, San Juan's Bodrum.

MENU

Margarita Salcedo

Beer garden

Another great 2011 entry is the royal beer garden.

Craft Pub and Grill and Draft Garden both have taken the enjoyment of beer to another level.

Craft serves Americana and non-Japanese craft beer including Balbar Stout and Hitachino Nest while Draft offers classics such as Hoegaarden, Stella and Becks, but in ice-cold draft.

At Draft, you can pair your beer with the amazing sandwich from newcomers of chef Carlo Miguel such as Angry Drunk Mussels (oolong) and Camron beef cheesesteak.

Craft and Draft have become the latest favorite hangouts of yuppies, especially for good-looking ones!

Wine scene

Meanwhile wine lovers have been having a ball with the latest entries in the wine scene.

Treey's Edmodon is now carrying Italian inbound de Montefalli wines, Chateau des Laurets '09, Chateau Clarke '11 and '10 and Les Lauzets Prestige '11.

Sommelier Selection offers the Italian Cabernet "Barco" Bosco Cantero, while Sicani Wine is now carrying wines from the vineyard of Anna Maria Cambria called Nel di Vino (try Assumanto).

Because it has been a stellar year for the food industry, I don't know how 2012 will top this.

But the interesting year is a Dragon, so the prediction is that it will be nothing short of amazing. Anyway, as long as we keep helping one another in times of crisis, the good old should keep coming and we will be good tidings.

As shown to us! Happy New Year, Philippines!

Chef Tessy's Garden Café, 17 Bonifacio Village, QC. tel. 8326121, 0915.4682224 ● *Atelier 117, 0917.8300893* ● *Manuel's Kitchen, 2/Fa Ambalino Rd., Baguio City, 0920.9821794, 0917.5468795* ● *Bale Dutung, Villa Gloria Hotel, Aguilar Cir., Pampanga, 0917.5358369* ● *Casa Nono, JP Laurel and Agoncillo Streets, San Miguel, Manila, 7355896* ● *Hermanos, Taco Shop, 27 Granada Ave. and Sara Gilmore's St., QC, 0920.9622237* ● *Orthodoxia, Mezzanine Greek Grill, 7838 Makati Ave. (across A. Brosas), 8878007, 0915.2030788* ● *Kinraw, 2 Alkaf Street and Lopez Jaena Streets, San Juan* ● *Craft Pub & Grill, Fort Strip, Bonifacio Global City, 9484722* ● *Draft Gastropub, Fort Strip, 8481723*

More details at inquirer.com.ph, facebook.com/margaretlicious, twitter.com/margaretlicious

New Year discoveries: Vanilla tea cake and 'no-lansa' smoked salmon

From page C1

these condiments, individually arranged on ramekins: chopped chives, minced red onion, sour cream, lemon wedges, and, if you really like your pasels, cavite. I also serve mine with a pear compote and grilled bacon.

Fish sauce
½ cup lemon juice
1 tbsp sugar, adjust according to taste
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp lemon zest
3 tbsp chopped fresh dill
¼ c sour cream
1 c cream
1 tbsp finely chopped capers
1 tbsp gherkins, finely chopped (optional, but I like the pickle bite)

Salt, to taste

Combine ingredients in a bowl. Whisk to combine. Serve cold.

Pear compote:
2 pears, OR pears preferably (the Asian varieties are too wa-

ter)
¼ c sugar
1 tsp fresh thyme
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper

SMOKED Salmon

1 tsp unsalted pancake
Pepper flakes, pinch
1 tsp vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine in saucepan. Cook until water has evaporated and the pears are soft. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Aloe Care

There are many facets to Her, this Ostrich.

A canvas canvassa, she is the force behind Pink Kitchen. Her hubby is firm. Jorge Ocampo. With Ning Ning Batista, she helped put the Weir-brand initial and organic products.

She and son Alec Gaw and asked me to try it. According to her, it's perfect for the holidays, after our so many days of overindulgence.

"Like rum, I am a lover of rich food and fine wine which cause

us acid reflux," she told me.

According to Bertina, the cause of the reflux for us is made fat. What caught her attention was a quip that read: "Aloe Care—Like a fire hydrant for your acid reflux."

"I have been taking care acids and know that it was not good for the long term," she said. "I tried Aloe Care, it worked and I was hooked."

I had a chance to check how effective it was recently when my morning Caney all of a sudden suffered from acid reflux. Her words, they were dead right—I was gone.

I asked her to take two ounces of grape-flavored Aloe Care, straight up from the mouthwatering cup that came with the bottle.

We finished the Aloe she actually drank it, an experiment to prove if the product worked.

In less than 15 minutes, she said she felt a whole lot better.

She finally left our house and sent me a text 15 minutes after. The text said she was feeling much better.

Another reason my ate likes aloe drinks. "It contains 200 vitamins minerals and amino acids that help rebuild sour cells," said Bertina. "It should be taken with fresh fruit juice like mango juice.

"I have it every morning with iced tangled tea. You can also mix it with yoghurt. It's rich in fiber which aids in constipation and a great detoxifier."

After knowing the benefits of Aloe Care, we, too have the S. seizes to eat, drink and be merry—at least for today.

Happy New Year!

New Year discoveries: Vanilla tea cake and 'no-lansa' smoked salmon

TWO OF my biggest Christmas discoveries are Chipi Ilarda's Vanilla Tea Cake and Silahis Food's Smoked Salmon.

Estelle has always loved baking. A few years ago in New York prodded her to take up baking at the Institute of Culinary Education, formerly Peter Kump's.

"I like sweets. Old World sweets," said Estelle. "I like baking bread and desserts. I don't decorate. My style is more neighborhood bakery or baked by the person who lives upstairs."

Her Vanilla Tea Cake is excellent. It's a cake of contradictions—it melts and crumbles in the mouth. An Old Spanish provincial recipe, it is a pound cake that is somewhere a cross between a cookie and a sweet, moist tea dip and dense; it is topped with caramel-tinged whipped cream.

Her Butterscotch Sauce is sublime. Its Upper East Side! If it were up to me, I would easily simply but Estar onion jar and pour it on a scoop of vanilla ice cream. My brother Boy does not need ice cream. He spoons the butterscotch off the jar.

Estelle has mastered the art of making her patrons look forward to what she'll do next. Everything she makes is done just right, the cookie not crisp for more.

I am not a Recipe person but her chocolate fudge topping is also very good. So is her New York Cheesecake: so velvety and smooth, rich and creamy. Very sinful.

Another of her creations is for ice cream—Strawberry Pirith Peanut Cookies. It's a buttery and aromatic bouquet to one bite!

Call Chipi Estelle at 0917-84 17049.

Salmon

I finally had the chance to try the smoked salmon of Mida Foods and it is fantastic.

No Lansa! No sharp fishy aftertaste! Texture-wise, it's nice and meaty, not crumbly, watery nor dusty, so unlike those that have been stored in wrong temperature or that have been kept in brine.

I served it as appetizer for Christmas lunch and my clan enjoyed it no end.

It will even deliver just a pack of salmon to your doorstep for a P300 delivery charge. Delivery charges are waived for orders P5,000up.

Call Mida Food Corp. at 0917-7916432.

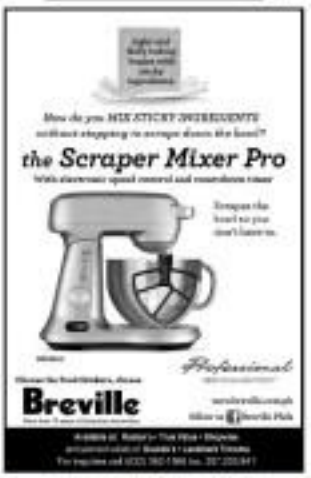
Here's what to do: Arrange the salmon on a platter and serve with

NEW YEAR'S CI

. . . and Aloe-based treatment for acid reflux and excessive holiday eating

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aquino



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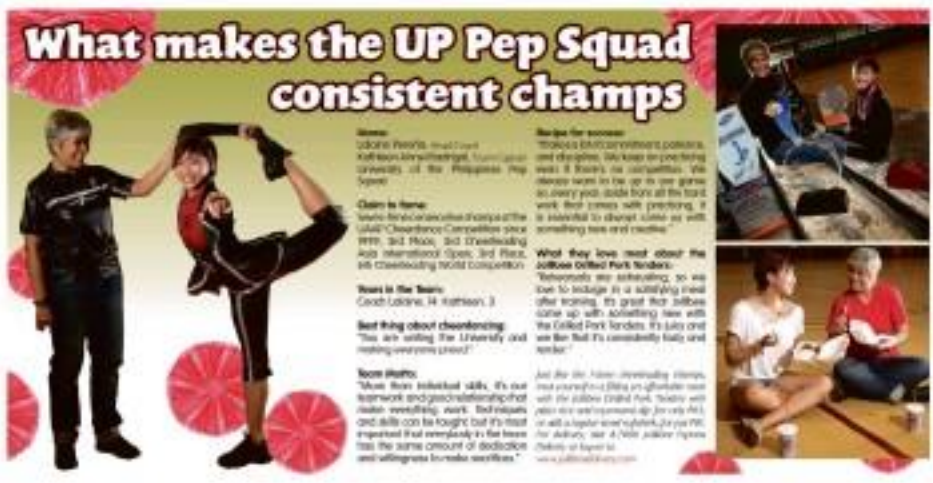


GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPPA — BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH_LEGASPI

DICK TRACY — BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CLARK

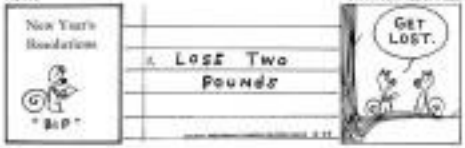
LOVE MOOTS — BY ELIZABETH HORNGLO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

RIKO MACHINE — BY PAWIK ABRERA

SEIN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

HUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL



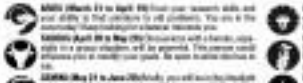
SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN — BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOK — BY MARA COLL

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that each row, column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

					5			
	6						4	
8		3	1	2		9		7
7						2		
		8		9		4		
		6						1
2		4		3	7	5		8
	5						7	
			6					

Difficulty Level ★★★

Answers to previous puzzle

9	4	5	6	7	1	8	3	2
3	8	1	5	2	4	6	9	7
6	7	2	8	3	9	1	4	5
7	9	3	1	6	8	5	2	4
4	5	6	2	9	7	3	1	8
8	1	2	4	5	3	7	6	9
1	6	9	7	8	2	4	5	3
5	3	7	9	4	6	2	8	1
2	4	8	3	1	5	9	7	6

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Wine selections to toast the New Year

COUNTRY COOKING

Alexis Fenix

Our wine-tasting forays yielded interesting finds

Clint Mikus Grand Cru Classe, Bordeaux 2003

Nothing can be better than toasting Year 2012 with any of these wines, strolling of prized estate.

fenixfamily@ymail.com

THE TEAM: Bordeaux lovers of Sophie Dennencourt and Francois Thienpont

THE WINES with which to toast the New Year are lined up before me. Each has a story to tell, stories that have been waiting to be told here.

One of them is Terra Burdigala, the name taken from the old Roman name for the Bordeaux region of France. We had lunch months ago with Francois Thienpont at Purple Ribs in Makati, inside Wine Depot that distributes the wines.

Thienpont is one of two men who founded Terra Burdigala; he provides the business expertise. The absent partner is Stephane Derenoncourt, who works the grapes.

Three years (two people who provide the know-how for many of the Bordeaux vineyards not located in the choice areas on how to produce and market quality wines; it sometimes means harvesting the grapes two weeks after most of the vineyards have harvested theirs. Thienpont said, because the sun is time makes for better quality wines, not for collecting but for ripening today.

That was exactly what we did at that lunch while pairing the different wines with the food cooked by chef Marco Laguno.

A dinner featuring Turkish wines was almost ruined because of buffalo muffle (from Denizli City in Turkey), but what kept us coping was our host commenting the menu, and the knowledge that chief winemaker David Rowell was there.

Rowell founded one of Australia's leading wineries in the Barossa Valley which he subsidized and named after a farm in Scotland where he studied as a landscaper. That former occupation surprised everyone, given his unbelievable turn as a winemaker, as exceptional as he is.

But while one can take his wine seriously wine should be enjoyed in the way we had that night, with the perfect fine, scenic dinner at the Old Manila of The Peninsula with stylist Tina Seck wines. The laughter that evening made up for the vanilla serenade.

In every wine tasting, we learn new things. A whiff of gasoline shocked my nose as a Spa Valley Terroir Sterling 2007 was served with the pineapple hoisin dessert at the Winebar at Cafe 1771 in Intramuros.

In this really how this wine should smell? I asked Hesz Rawling, global sales manager of Spa Valley Wines in Marlborough, New Zealand. He looked amused and said, yes, this is the aroma that their Riesling embodies! I sipped. My nose, whichever no smell gasoline (as well as fruit fish when he makes) should be pleased. It might take me a while to get used to it, but I will get accustomed to it the way I've taken to the smell of durian, truffle and mahole.

Many wine makers and marketers, or even owners, visit from where their vineyards are. But I know two who actually live here.

One is Edouard Hiadlot, who owns Domaine Terres de Berdoues and whose family is known in pinoteau here to about two generations ago.

The other is David Peabody who has a company here but whose family is one of two who own Craggy Range in New Zealand. At a lunch at Le Regine in Makati with guests chef Jonas Lundgren from Sweden, the host of the day was Jeanne Inocencio of the refreshing welcome of a 2009 Sauvignon Blanc. Peabody said that every vineyard owned by Craggy Range is planted to grapes that are perfectly suited to the terroir, or the mix of soil and climate. While in only there are about five plants in New Zealand for just that.

And, thankfully, the two were in Philippines in December to be with us at his previous every year with a charity dinner that chooses the Miss Missions Guild ably planned by Tita Menardo Trillo. And executed by the Pinot Hotel and Casino's Lil chef Andy Dizon.

The Chinese menu proved that the dishes can be paired with the best of the Bordeaux-like wines. Jean Blaise to Rouge, and then the Baron Nathaniel, Pauillac 2008 and the Chateau Haut-Batailley, also Bordeaux boutique Cuvee, and introduced Chateau Grand of Bordeaux, successfully paired because here it tastes basically with a tang of grilled meat. It has one, named for Frenchtang and has 14 days in stainless steel tanks just last year. An important highlight for the meeting for restaurant is that they grow a new terroir-grafting by sowing the local Terroir-matched seeding between convenient setting.

The key can be found in Peabody Woody Hamilton, Hawkesbay, Pannbyan Bay, Denton City, Ning, Nang, Lo Pena and Lo valley's products.

Another wine that hails from the Down City of the South is Ah Barbecue, which is consistently acclaimed as one of the best wines at Barbecue. Ah Barbecue started as a simple carnivore's life where the best beef Wellington, which Edouard and Barbecue Inspector Cuba, and introduced Chicken Inasal of the island, successfully paired because here it tastes basically with a tang of grilled meat. It has one, named for Frenchtang and has 14 days in stainless steel tanks just last year. An important highlight for the meeting for restaurant is that they grow a new terroir-grafting by sowing the local Terroir-matched seeding between convenient setting.

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BOTTLES made for toasting

Hot off the Grill! Best Inihaw Spots the country!

SOOO PINOY

By Michelle Velasco

The smell of freshly grilled meat is enough to prove that heaven is here on earth. For most Pinoys, there's nothing more rewarding than to feel inihaw meat making contact.

At Barbecue, an ala carte restaurant specializing all over the country that have perfectly complemented with flavored vegetables. The grounds not only regards an entrepreneurial revolution about food business is obviously not to expand. It also gives prominence to the Filipino cuisine itself, who formulates our culinary and cultural communication to outside. For now, our country's dining is only dictated by the many western ways and restaurants and is mostly food, not always filling.

Inihaw can be traced back to the 1950s, at the old days when the barbecue is brought over at the old Virgin Olympic Stadium(s). It has fifteen names, aside that food then only called "pork ribs for barbecue(s)" unlike today where many people from Manila would thought of eating are grilled in particular. I remember when on my apartment from Germany would find our sister she favored rice. Pigeon are grilled pork intestine from the island city, and my Pinoy friends around. "he cannot breathe delicious."

The Cebu area and the Visayas are still regions with the Bayugan mixed. "Two there are the neighbor Divisoria and Binondo, Manila. Binondo is the world's oldest Chinatown(s) (Indian). Whatever city, there is no fancy name involved. Barbecue(s) are either in street sidelines. It is also interesting to note the 19 century regulations in commercial zones, grilled in other countries where fancy grilling are the norm, called Philippines as like a cheap better.

"Hey, look for either dishes that are considered. A new social movement on Facebook has taken centers by storm from a good cause. Team Pinoy aims to encourage Pinoys to explore beyond "tutong lahat" and eat local. Pinoys cutting by featuring the best Filipino tastes with their fascinating Pinoys food. It also takes diners back about our food history, and about good places to eat in all the inihaw. Join Pinoy fan. Hashtag #teampinoy and #pinoyfoodtrip to share your favorite inihaw spots.

Unilever Food Solutions

INQUIRER

AA Barbecue's menu

AA Barbecue's

Andok's Litempo

Andok's Litempo

Lucban sa Kamia, Quiapo

Chicken Inasal

Chicken Inasal

Chicken Inasal

Two old reliable restos for the holidays

IT'S A MERRY season, so eat to your heart's desire. Enjoy some holiday indulgences. For two days we escaped the tedious preparations at home and set off to a high-end restaurant and renewed past pleasures at a reliable Italian eatery.

Chef Jessie Rockwell Club

G/L Amorsolo Square, Rockwell Center, Makati City; tel. 8909443/7650

Mention the name and it often evokes a forbidding "Oh no!" Basically, because it is the ultimate in high-end dining, therefore, very expensive. Why not try it at least once?

Dining area—Sedate in conservative colors, with paintings (for sale) on the walls. Choose the side tables against the glass wall to have a good look at the comings and goings. It could be pleasant from the crowd that day that indeed the discriminating pay for a good meal.

Service...Menus are handed as guests are led to their tables after being greeted graciously by a receptionist. We missed chief Jessie doing the rounds. Perhaps, she has become confident of the efficiency of her staff.

Staff...could have been perfect had not one of them forgotten to serve us the glass of red wine we initially ordered. It took a wave and another request to get it, this time from another server.

Suggested menu...As in her previous outlets, the ideal starter is the fresh Canada lobster with smoked salmon, grilled prawns, scallops and mushrooms bathed with their special dressing. The hearty two-inch thick Arabica was exquisite with mashed potatoes and some greens. The lobsters was done to its rose juice and the Tender loin was perfect.

No one can leave without getting a look at the desserts. They serve over a dozen, the perfect size after a fulfilling meal. Choose the flavor you prefer. Coffee, of course, follows.

Usual service and government taxes are collected. Senior cards are honored.

Rating

La Nueva Pasalleria (cafe restaurant)

San Antonio Plaza Arcade, Harbor Park, Manila; tel. 8178568

This must be one of the most durable restaurants in the city, having stayed in the same location for years and has kept a clientele that always comes back.

Dining area—A small dimly lit place, this has a rather homey ambiance. That day, turnover was quick as diners kept coming in until about 2 p.m. So wonder reservations are held only for 15 minutes. It feels an old world, with many of the guests in their mature years and Spanish speaking.

Service...Our waiter in and is shown to the reserved table, given a menu folder. The senior couple (we presume they are) constantly check the staff and service.

Staff...Unobtrusive, nearly quietly elegant, the accommodating.

Suggested menu...Start with an Antipasto of Spinach Tortolini, which is stuffed with Tortellini and Parmesan Mediterranean sauce. Choose one of the Gourmet or side dishes of salads, cold cuts and cheeses with olives and sun-dried tomatoes bathed in olive oil. Go for the main course of either pasta (Bolognese with ground meat in tomato-based sauce or the white Carbonara) or the heavier meat dishes. I'm not sure their original Estofado cube and stew by the Italian cellist.

Service charge is added to the bill, also government taxes. Senior cards are honored.

Rating

THE QUIET DINER
RESTOS AT A GLANCE

RATING INDEX

Poor

Good

Excellent

ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Soriano-G. Velarde

Mobile Alert: Text [illegible] to 2467 | Website: [illegible] | E-mail: [illegible]
Send your feedback: [illegible]

AJ Dee, actor

WHAT he's thankful for in the year ends: "Lots of blessings! Plus, I quit smoking... Kind'a a big deal for me. I hope to remain on the right path. I pray for more good things ever year, more interesting projects. And I hope my family stays healthy and safe." — Reynan San Diego Jr.

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2011 show biz shockers

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly-Anne Carvajal

SCANDALS and controversies are the stuff show business is made of. Funny how shows in this town beat national news in scope and impact most of the time.

Perhaps it's because this chismis/intriga/chika thing has become the Filipinos' national pastime. It serves as sort of a comic relief to our daily lull and dull like hours marinduks.

Let's look back on five major industry shockers of 2011 and the lessons they left us. There's to an even more exciting roller-coaster ride in the show biz carnival in 2012. Send in the clowns. Let the masquerade begin...

Ramgen Revilla murder case: The plot thickens, but blood is not always thicker than water. The love of money is the root of all evil, even among branches of the same family. Make sure your benefactors is built on solid ground and beware of fallen twigs.

KC Concepcion-Piolo Pascual breakup: We cannot change our lovers, his career

(to SHOWBIZ)

PBSD President KC Concepcion

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DUMAGUETE

BACOLOD

ILOILO

GENSAN

ANGELES

The Perfect Venue

CLAUDINE Barretto

2011 show biz...

from page D1

only unmask them.

Ai Ai Twister-Rhian Ramos rides **scandal:** When you fall in love these days, it's not just your heart you jeopardize but your career, too. Recovery or know what ends up online. Love is still blind, but it sometimes comes with a hidden camera.

Andi Eigenmann's pregnancy questioner: If baby is a wake-up call after a night of teenage passion, boys can make his loss her sin often too miserable to own up to the devil. Sin can be heavy with child and even more pregnant with...

Gladys Guevarra-John Lloyd Cruz-Shaina Magdayao breakup: Has the new kid on the block been an added emotional baggage? You can't have a future together if you're so engrossed in each other's past.

Claudine Barretto-Raymart Santiago marriage blues: Marriage can sometimes be a mirage. When a couple sees, we can't. And what we see, a couple may not.

Marlene Gutiérrez-Coco Martin brand new thigh

SHOW 04 SHOWBIZ News HEART Evangelista

Ayala Malls

MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 4

1: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY
2: MY HOUSE HUSBAND
3: YESTERDAY TODAY TOMORROW
4: SIGURADO MANO
5: ANG PANDAY 2
6: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13
7: ENTENG NG INA MO

GREENBELT 3

1: MY HOUSE HUSBAND
2: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13

GREENBELT 5

1: ENTENG NG INA MO
2: ANG PANDAY 2
3: YESTERDAY TODAY TOMORROW
4: SIGURADO MANO
5: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY
2: SIGURADO MANO
3: ANG PANDAY 2
4: ENTENG NG INA MO
5: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13

AYALA CENTER CEBU

1: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY
2: MY HOUSE HUSBAND
3: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL
4: ANG PANDAY 2

MARQUEE

1: ENTENG NG INA MO
2: ANG PANDAY 3
3: SIGURADO MANO
4: MY HOUSE HUSBAND

MARKET! MARKET!

1: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13
2: ENTENG NG INA MO
3: ANG PANDAY 2
4: YESTERDAY TODAY TOMORROW
5: SIGURADO MANO
6: MY HOUSE HUSBAND
7: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY

TRINOMA

1: KINGPIN: ASKONG SALONGSA STORY
2: MY HOUSE HUSBAND
3: SIGURADO MANO
4: YESTERDAY TODAY TOMORROW
5: ANG PANDAY 2
6: ENTENG NG INA MO
7: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13

ABREEZA

1: ENTENG NG INA MO
2: ANG PANDAY 2
3: SHAKE, BATTLE & ROLL 13
4: YESTERDAY TODAY TOMORROW

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GLORIETTA
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RESIDENCES DRIVE STREET
TRINOMA
MARQUEE
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'Disney on Ice' stars new characters

THE HOLIDAY show "Disney on Ice: Let's Celebrate," ongoing till Jan. 3 at the Smart Araneta Coliseum, consists of a select twenty-four-hour with Mickey and Minnie Mouse; a Halloween feast with Jack Skellington; and several of the Disney Villains; a "Very Merry Unbirthday" with Alice; and a royal ball with the Disney Princesses. The show also features Disney's newest princess, Princess Tiana, as well as famous characters from "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "Pinocchio," "Cinderella," "Alice in Wonderland," "Peter Pan," "Sleeping Beauty," "101 Dalmatians," "The Jungle Book," "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," "The Nightmare Before Christmas," "Toy Story," "Mulan," "Toy Story 2," "Lilo & Stitch," "Enchanted" and "The Princess and the Frog." Dial 911-5555 for ticket information.

BUZZ Lightyear of "Toy Story"

2011 show...

From page D3

Salvador: A love triangle has many stories. It depends which angle you are looking at.

Marian Rivera to thank Kristoffer over Dingdong Dantes: It's time to treat our partner but it's tough to trust the women/men around him/her.

Jaclyn Jose vs Sylvia Sanchez: Sa mga mata ng mga tao, para sa akin, pareho kayong magaling sa inyong klase/specialization."

(Email [redacted])

MATTEO Guidicelli and Maja Salvador